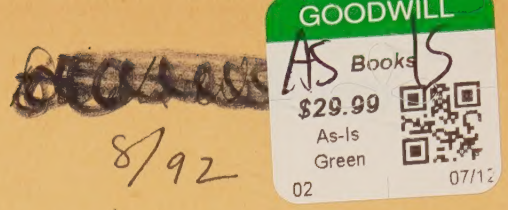
ICE-BOUND

JAMES M. ASHTON



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The Author

Fortified against Arctic weather

ICE-BOUND

A Trader's Adventures
IN THE SIBERIAN ARCTIC

BY

JAMES M. ASHTON

With 35 Illustrations
and a Map

NEW YORK : LONDON
G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
The Knickerbocker Press
1928

ICE-BOUND

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by
James M. Ashton

Made in the United States of America

PREFACE

THIS is an unembellished, necessarily personal narrative covering events and experiences believed novel, instructive, and interesting. Arctic Siberia with the unexplored area of the North Polar Sea are parts of the earth not yet understood nor visualized.

This book should bring the reader in closer touch with everyday events, conditions, and actual life within this region. Future possibilities and opportunities for the younger generation, and those yet unborn, may I trust be extracted from its pages. Should it place upon the map uncharted and hitherto unknown settlements, with the manners and customs of unknown people, I shall feel rewarded for having presented it.

The story is largely extracted from my diary and records of the ship.

I wish to acknowledge the valuable assistance of Miss Marguerite Aspinwall in co-relating events and classifying illustrations. Some of the latter

are not as I should wish, due to my inexperience and the difficulties of photographing from a moving base in Arctic atmosphere.

Complying with many requests I insert here parts of an address which I delivered before the Pacific Foreign Trade Convention, shortly after the voyage, as follows:

"In studying the Siberian Arctic from the trader's viewpoint, two points should be kept in mind.

"First: That we are dealing practically with a 'No Man's Land' so far as fixed avenues of trade are concerned, to say nothing of economic and political conditions, both of which are, however, rapidly improving.

"Second: Mutual trade and commerce with the Siberians must be approached along constructive channels of development, and pursued, not abruptly, but gradually and with careful and conservative adherence to Siberia's powers of absorption and use, as well as her powers of production.

"The field is primitive, but very promising. Present demands for our products are of course not large as compared with other markets but they are most pressing, as both native tribes and the

Russian of that section are in great need of the necessaries of life, and are anxious to acquire them from the United States, Canada and Alaska. The Russian inhabitants, both Bolsheviki and Mensaviki, are still slightly on the war path but have about 'buried the hatchet.' Many of them as refugees, trappers, hunters or prospectors are trying to get back to base and rehabilitate themselves in and along those avenues of trade and production to which they are best adapted. They require our exports to reinforce and expedite their efforts, and such efforts will, not immediately but soon, give us a line of imports which we can readily absorb.

"They want flour, tea, sugar, tobacco, cooking utensils, tools, tents, warm and heavy clothing of all kinds; not the most expensive, and yet it must not be shoddy or lacking in durability. Light clothing, such as calico, denims, ginghams, flannels, are also in demand, both by the Chug-chee and Deerman, as well as the Russians and other white men of the country. The natives delight in cheap and highly-colored cloth as a covering for their skin parkas, and when their native skin clothing is thus hidden, they feel themselves dressed in the very pink of perfection.

"Possibly the elements entering into Northern Siberian-American trade will be more readily understood if we devote a moment to the personnel of the inhabitants, their customs and vocations; because their desires and requirements are, of course, based on these. Keeping in mind that southern and northern (or Arctic) Siberia are quite different, let us first take the white men of northern Siberia. They are Russians from all parts of Russia, some of them refugees who fled the country at the time of the Revolution, but most of them old-timers, some being descendants of political prisoners, or the prisoners themselves now freed from the salt mines and other forms of servitude.

"At Petropavlovski and other trade points in Kamchatka and about the Okhotsk Sea, as well as at Anadyr, and at various minor points between Anadyr, East Cape and the territory about the Kolyma River, are to be found old Russian settlements. They are business men, traders and trappers of intelligence, energy, and commercial vision. Americans, Canadians and Englishmen are few and far between. Aside from the Russians, there are more Norwegians and Germans than North Americans. It is, however, safe to say

that ninety per cent of the white inhabitants are Russians.

"The native inhabitants of Arctic Siberia are Chug-chees and Deermen, with the exception of the Eskimos living in large villages at Indian Point and East Cape. These Eskimos should not be confounded with the Chug-chee natives of the far Arctic, nor with the inland and coast Deermen of northern Siberia. Contact with them all is about the only way to distinguish between them, as their copper colored complexions are quite similar. Their language, however, is somewhat different, just as the dialects of the Chug-chees and Deermen slightly differ.

"These people do not read or write, so personal contact is the only way of learning anything definite about them. They know apparently nothing of time or distance. They eat when they are hungry—which seems to be all the time—sleep when they are sleepy; know little or nothing about money and apparently do not care a continental which way the old world outside their little orbit wags.

"The Eskimos and Chug-chees are polygamous, having anywhere from two to nine wives, while the Deerman is generally content with one—

although he, too, doubles up occasionally. Plenty of children are to be found in and about the igloos of all native settlements. The parents are devoted and most kindly to their offspring. They will risk the greatest dangers and suffer the most intense hardships to protect them.

"The Eskimo is a fisherman, a sealer, and a whaler. The Chug-chee is all that at times, but he is essentially a hunter and trapper. The walrus and the seal are, of course, his greatest staples for his house and boat building, for dog meat, and his own food. By nature the Chug-chees are more virile and energetic than the Eskimos, but they do not equal the Deermen mentally or physically. The latter are taller, more lithe, mentally more alert, and stronger, and for time out of mind they have subsisted on their herds of reindeer. The reindeer yield them food, clothing, and, to some extent, shelter, although their igloos are more frequently made from the walrus and ugruk skins, which they acquire in trade with the Chug-chees, during the summer months when the Deermen come up to the Arctic coast with their herds.

"These Deermen want large copper kettles, certain knives and other articles of hardware quite different from those in the same line desired by the

Chug-chees. Compare the better types of our own inland Indians with our coast Siwash, and you have something of the difference between the Siberian Deermen and Chug-chees; yet both Chug-chees and Eskimos are vastly superior to the Siwash.

"Japanese traders are seeking business in the Siberian Arctic, and Russians far to the south about Vladivostok will surely return north as Russian reconstruction progresses. The chief traders at present, however, are Americans. There were six trading schooners in the Siberian Arctic during the season I spent up there, and one whaling schooner. Of these, the whaler was from San Francisco; one of the traders was from Japan; one from Nome, and the other four all from Puget Sound.

"One of the four was the schooner *Iskum* and possibly the best way of describing the requirements of this far northern trade, both export and import, will be to mention in general terms the trading cargo which the *Iskum* took north with her, and the character of barter which we received in return.

"This consisted of axes, saws, knives, and various lines of hardware; guns, ammunition, tools and cooking utensils; lanterns and lamps; animal traps,

sleeping bags, tents, matches, candles, condensed milk, flour, sugar, tea, chocolate, molasses, tobacco and pipes; heavy shirts and sweaters; thread and needles, thimbles, pins, etc.; soap, combs, phonographs, mouth organs and other minor musical instruments; goggles and eye-glasses of different types; pants and overalls, and highly colored calicos as well as other dry goods; necklaces, beads and many other notions attractive to the savage eye and likely to soothe the savage breast.

"We received from them in exchange fox skins of all kinds; polar, brown and grizzly bearskins; Arctic wolf, wolverine, reindeer and fawn skins; hair seal and ugruk skins; whalebone, walrus skins, and all grades of walrus ivory, both raw and decorative; the feathers and down of Arctic birds; the teeth of extinct mammoths; native slippers, moccasins, gloves, belts, pouches; also many very beautiful ivory curios made by the natives. Others most primitive and crude, but unique, were brought down. Some very old curios apparently indicative of Assyrian and Egyptian civilizations were obtained. These may be seen at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C. The remainder are, for the present, cared for in a warehouse in New York City.

"The schooner was owned and operated by the Phoenix Northern Trading Company, with headquarters in Tacoma, and stockholders in all the leading cities of the Northwest; this being our fifth season in Siberian Arctic trade."

THE AUTHOR.

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A TRADER'S ADVENTURES IN THE SIBERIAN ARCTIC

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CHAPTER I

PURPOSE OF THE VOYAGE

IT is natural enough that the exploring or scientific expedition going into the Arctic should hold an appealing and spectacular interest for newspapers and the general public; yet it is a fact that the trader in the North, in the course of his daily business, goes into many far and strange places which neither explorer nor scientist ever reaches.

In the Siberian Arctic, for instance, he sees queer little lost villages of natives, tucked away into unexplored corners of that snow-and-ice world. He learns many interesting phases of the life and customs of the people with whom he trades. Using small, flat-bottomed boats—frequently native skin boats—to get into the lagoons and up the rivers from the shore, where boats of greater draught could not hope to pass. He manages to wriggle precariously in and out of

almost inaccessible regions in which he has reason to hope that a few igloos (and therefore barter) may be found. I believe I may be excused for terming the life of our far Northern traders one of the few legitimately adventurous callings left in a practical Twentieth Century. The fact that so little is written or told about it, is at once my reason and apology for offering a small personal contribution to the subject.

In 1918 I accepted the position of counsel for an Arctic trading company, with headquarters in Tacoma, maintaining stations on both the Siberian and Alaskan sides of the Arctic. I did not think then that Fate—or perhaps in this case it might more fittingly be designated "Business Necessity" —would one day send me personally into most of the hidden-away, interesting places where our traders operated. Yet this is exactly what happened four years later; and fantastic as such a bare statement must sound, my trip was only one of the many by-products of the Russian Revolution, then taking place half a world away.

After the dethronement of the Czar, business conditions on the Siberian shores of the Pacific became necessarily more or less upset. This instability and unrest reached eventually into the

Siberian Arctic. It affected even that remote part of the world where there were, and still are, about one hundred white men and four or five thousand natives—all of the latter being primitive savages.

The first indications of trouble in that region began with the increasing difficulty traders had in realizing on their barter, which consisted principally of furs, ivory, whalebone and the like. Complaints began to come into headquarters, and finally the situation was put up to me, at Tacoma, in the hope that I might suggest a remedy.

Contradictory reports about these conditions were being sent to our Company from its various Siberian stations, and all of them were unsatisfactory. As time went on, matters continued to go from bad to worse. In 1922, the situation had grown so grave that the directors unanimously resolved something definite must be done. I was elected managing director of the Company, in addition to my duties as counsel, and made it a point to examine and cross-examine everyone identified with the concern, particularly those who had been in the North. But getting no appreciable results, I decided that the best way of solving the problem was to visit, personally, our various

Siberian stations, and to study the region and the natives at first hand.

In this way I hoped to come at the heart of the trouble, and perhaps too—for none of us entirely outgrow the boy in us, no matter how staid our years or profession—the adventure of the trip secretly appealed to me. My work as counsel for the Company had whetted my natural interest in those frozen lands which our trading schooner visited each year. Almost insensibly I found myself carried away by this new idea of accompanying her on her next sailing. I was fairly sure it would be an experience worth having.

Of course, once my decision to go became known, I was deluged with doleful warnings. People shook their heads. They pointed out that I was not a boy any longer, and that such a hazardous voyage, with all the hardships and privations which are inseparable from a trip into the Arctic, might have an unpleasant ending. Probably I would never return. Drowning, starvation, pneumonia, as well as death by wild beasts and still wilder savages, were among the happy alternatives offered me. However, having had some experience prospecting in Alaska years before, the trip seemed to me the ideal opportunity for a

really original vacation and a high adventure. Far from being dissuaded, as these well-intentioned alarmists intended, I was all the more stubbornly resolved to go.

From a standpoint of business, it was advisable for someone to make a first-hand report of existing conditions up there. In fact, it was all but a necessity in the interests of the trading company I represented. Whatever qualms I had were dispelled by this reflection. I was also in very real need of a complete rest, away from all telegrams, letters or telephones calling me back to business problems. I would escape all of these in the Arctic, that was certain. And as for the hardships—well, why not admit it? I was actually looking forward to proving to myself that I was still young and strong enough to face such things tranquilly. Anyone can take the conventional vacation, with its modern luxuries of seashore hotel or mountain camp; with hot water galore, hot food served appetizingly three times a day, and dry clothes after a storm. I liked to think that on the vacation I proposed for myself, none of these things were to be anticipated. It was well, as it turned out, that I had settled this point in my mind beforehand, for assuredly we saw little

of the ordinary comforts of civilization throughout the trip. Yet so far as I know, none of us were any the worse off for lack of them.

I conceded this much to the mournful prophecies thrust at me: I had a few minor changes made in our regular trading schooner, *Iskum*, calculated to add slightly to the comfort of all on board. However, such comfort was bound to be meager enough at best, for the *Iskum* is one of the smallest boats —if not actually *the* smallest—that has ever penetrated so far into the Siberian Arctic. In length she measured only 67 feet, with 16 feet beam, but she had been reinforced and sheathed with iron bark, and had an iron stem, with shoe carried well back beneath her keel. The bow inside, just aft of the stem, was braced with railroad rails, and also used as the chain locker. She carried a mainsail, foresail, staysail and jib, and her standing and running gear were the best obtainable. Her motive power was a 75 H.P. Semi-Diesel Fairbanks-Morse oil burning engine.

Altogether she was one of the best ice-breakers, regardless of size, navigating the Arctic. You could not spend eight months on a staunch little schooner like the *Iskum* and not grow slightly boastful of her good points. Therefore I make no

Iskum drying sails when in Arctic ice pack

apologies for an occasional word of appreciation.

Fortunately we secured a navigating officer who was more or less familiar with ice conditions in Northwestern Russia and off the coasts of Northern Norway and Sweden. Mr. David Rutherford, who had been elected president of the Company when I was chosen as its managing director, decided to go along; but as the schooner was not licensed to carry passengers, it was necessary, in order to comply with the United States shipping laws, for both Dave and me to sign on as members of the crew. I occupied the position of purser—later being exalted to that of supercargo—while the President of the Company went as steward.

The actual crew consisted of Captain Winnerlund, W. W. Putta, First Mate and Navigating Officer, the engineer and two sailors. One of the sailors was a Dalmatian, who could speak Russian, and whom we selected largely because of his ability to act as interpreter. The other was a Scotchman named Alec Nicholson, with experience in Northern waters. In addition to this list, there was of course the ship's cook, a fine fellow with, as we discovered later, a remarkable trick of handling the natives. Many a choice tenderloin

of polar bear for our evening meal, or a quarter of reindeer on tap, lashed to the rigging, we owed entirely to "the Doctor" (as a cook at sea is invariably called) and his invaluable powers of beguilement.

Glancing over the brief diary I kept on the trip, I find we cast off from the dock in Tacoma, at 4:50 on Sunday afternoon, the 4th of June, 1922. Unfortunately we had a bit of bad luck at the very beginning. This was occasioned by the engineer cutting off the index finger of his left hand as he reached in to tickle one of the parts of our new engine. After applying some iodine from a first-aid kit we had on board, the Captain and I very soon had the man's hand tied up in seafaring and lawyerlike style. But as we had a long sea trip ahead of us, with no possibility of real surgical aid for months to come, I decided to have a surgeon dress the wound at Victoria, B. C., and also give me explicit directions what to do if any trouble developed when we got under way again.

In spite of his accident the engineer pluckily stood his watch as usual that evening—which struck me as splendid proof of the kind of courage we should need on such a voyage—and at 8:00

Iskum departing from Tacoma

the following morning we reached Victoria, where the hand was properly stitched and dressed.

I refer particularly to our making this stop at Victoria because it forced us to change our routing. Instead of going out through the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and making for the northwest in order to reach the Passes through the Aleutian Islands, we decided it would be better to proceed north as far as Ketchikan, where, if necessary, further medical attention could be had; and then make the trip of 1200 miles across the Alaskan Gulf through Akutan Pass to Dutch Harbor and Unalaska—both places being located on the shores of the same bay on Unalaska Island.

CHAPTER II

TACOMA TO BEHRING SEA

THE trip to Ketchikan was more or less uneventful. After leaving Victoria and passing through Seymour Narrows, the Captain decided to follow the Hecate Straits, rather than the inside narrow and tidal channels taken by the regular steamers. These Straits have many sunken rocks and rocky bars not as yet properly charted, and we bowled full speed ahead onto one of them in the middle of the first night. This caused a quarter of an hour of rather tense excitement on board, until it was certain that the pump showed no water coming in.

The Virgin Rocks which were passed on the starboard side going north through the Straits afforded us all a good deal of entertainment. They, and the waters about them, were fairly swarming with huge sea lions, all very active and noisy. The fog having lifted during the night, we changed

our course and sailed as close to these quaint creatures as possible, to study their antics. As we neared them, their united barking grew so loud that we could literally hardly hear ourselves speak. The animals seemed larger and far more numerous than those near the Cliff House at San Francisco.

We had been under sail until we approached Dixon's Entrance where the wind was dead ahead, and then we relied upon our engine for motor power. The sea had begun kicking up, accompanied by a return of the fog, and since we were in waters bristling with unseen rocks, we moved slowly, feeling our way, and sounding the whistle at regular intervals.

Later, to everyone's relief, the fog lifted a little, and we were able to make better speed; and later still it blew away entirely, leaving us an unobstructed view of one of the most magnificent and inspiring sunsets it has ever been my good fortune to witness. The afterglow painted the entire heavens, long after the sun itself had disappeared, from a palette equipped with every color in the rainbow.

Hecate Straits quite outdid themselves that night in trying to show us samples of the kind of

rough weather we could expect during the rest of the voyage. Heavy seas stove in the forecastle number 2 port light, and cracked numbers 1 and 2 on the starboard bow, so the Captain felt that, under the circumstances, it would be wise to put into Ketchikan for minor repairs and a fresh supply of water.

We reached the latter place at seven that evening, and spent the night there. The crew had shore leave, and spent most of the allotted four hours in trying to find a place to take a bath. We pulled out early the next morning for Unalaska, 1148 miles away.

From that time until we sighted the Shumagin Islands on our starboard bow (six days and six hours of sailing), we sighted neither land nor other ship. Now and then we saw a whale off in the distance; and once we caught a glimpse of a sea pigeon and four gooneys. These gooneys—usually big black birds, although occasionally of a very dark grey color—have a large wing spread, and are extremely rapid fliers. They live entirely on fish, and are always found far out at sea. They like to follow a ship, dipping and circling in swift, graceful flight, but they never seem to come near land. On a voyage like ours, when you leave the

gooneys behind, you know land of some kind is near.

Aside from these occasional glimpses of life, we were the solitary inhabitants of a world that was made up of restless, tossing water, and cloud-swept skies—the latter mostly gray and sunless. Even in fairly calm weather, the scene wore a dark and forbidding aspect. Only the sunsets struck a different, brighter note in the general loneliness and desolation about us. They were always gorgeous riots of color.

At this period of our voyage, sunset occurred about nine o'clock, and I never let anything interfere with my being on deck to see what new, strange color formations the evening would show. One which I remember most vividly came at the end of a day of fair sailing winds, when we had been bowling along briskly under a sky which had been, for once, of a clear and cheerful blue. Then, as sunset hour drew near, a marvelous cloud rode up the sky to the west, shaped at the top like a gigantic golden chariot out of some old mythological legend. It was jet black underneath, curiously suggesting a golden urn with a big golden ball dropping down below it. Below this again, almost as if it had really issued out of the

cloud itself, a great flight of birds sprang suddenly into view and winged its way south across the bright glory of the sky.

At ten in the morning of the 16th, we lifted the first of the Shumagin Islands. These islands are a regular death trap for unwary ships because of the constant storms, and high winds that sweep over that region, as we were to learn on our return voyage, to our sorrow.

We had come by now a distance of 971 miles from Ketchikan, and different kinds of birds were entering our sky-and-water worlds. I recall the sea parrots and fish hawks most distinctly. Our old friends, the gooneys—true to their instinct for avoiding the land—were disappearing. We only saw an occasional one among this new variety of feathered creatures circling near the ship.

Sunsets were growing later too. On the evening of the 16th my diary tells me that I was able to read, in my bunk, from eight until nine, with the bright sunshine streaming through the porthole. This was another of the many curious features of the far north, that kept my delight in the voyage fresh and eager. There are some advantages in being a seafaring tenderfoot after all. It's true

that one makes mistakes, and suffers more from hardships, but the novelty of each new day more than counterbalances all the drawbacks.

That night the little *Iskum* rolled heavily, a particularly trying motion to the inexperienced. The Captain explained that about midnight a half-gale of wind had come up across our course for Akutan Pass, throwing us into the trough of the sea. The schooner rode it well, however, only shipping a little water over her bows.

Early in the morning—about half after eight—Mt. Shishaldin, a volcano 9387 feet in height, was sighted. Then in succession, the Isanotski peaks (8088 and 8032 feet, and snow covered) could be seen clearly. Shishaldin looks like our own Mt. Hood, and also—or at least the Captain so assured me—like the famous Japanese sacred mountain, Fujiyama.

All of the Aleutian Islands were heavily covered with a smooth and shining mantle of snow, rising out of the sea before us like glittering mountains, austerely high and beautiful. We turned in that night to be awakened at Dutch Harbor in the morning.

CHAPTER III

UNALASKA TO SIBERIA

ON our first evening at Unalaska we dined with Mr. Strauss of the Alaska Commercial Company; a very pleasant young married couple by the name of Cornwall (Mr. Cornwall being in charge of the United States Wireless Station at Dutch Harbor); Mr. Day of the Department of Education; and a number of Naval officers stationed there; all most hospitable. These, in turn, we entertained on board the *Iskum* the following day, later visiting the Jesse Lee Home where we purchased some of the needlework of the native children. At four that afternoon we cleared the Harbor and surrounding islands, setting our course for Emma Harbor and Indian Point, both in Siberia across the Behring Sea from Nome.

The wind—a fine sailing breeze—was from the West, but it increased tremendously during the first half of the night. Behring Sea was living up to its reputation for storms, for by midnight

we were forced to lower the main and foresail, and were running under the staysail with the *Iskum* rolling and plunging heavily.

My port was under water most of the night, as the ship was down to her rail on the starboard side. As sleep was out of the question, I lay and watched the curiously phosphorescent effect of the water. It was so bright that I could see the smaller fish and some larger objects which, in the brief second of vision they allowed me, I took to be dolphin and halibut. I also made out several fur seal, one of which, doubtless attracted by my light, actually swam up to stare at me face to face through the heavy glass of the port, his eyes glistening with curiosity and perhaps a touch of fear. Then he darted hurriedly away.

We had not seen the sun since entering Behring Sea, and on the morning following our night of storms, we woke to find that the wind had died to a faint breath astern, and that a woolly white curtain of mist had settled down on us. We could see the water for about two hundred yards all about the schooner, but beyond that circle of shrunken horizon line there was apparently nothing either around us or overhead. I had a curiously oppressive sense of utter vacancy, and

wondered where the world had gone to. The sensation was distinctly novel.

I soon fell back on the meager store of reading matter I had laid in for the trip—never having expected to have much leisure for books. However, I soon learned our voyage might be counted on for indefinite periods of hectic activity, followed by a dead level of monotony—about evenly divided, I should say.

Soon our horizon had receded two thousand feet or so from us, but the sun still refused to appear, and though the thermometer registered 35 above, the air felt colder than it would have been at the same temperature at home. Probably this was accounted for by the dampness, as well as the near vicinity of ice—for the Captain warned us that we were almost certain to encounter floating ice in a day or two.

We were so far north now that it was light all night, and sleeping somewhat handicapped. Certainly the *Iskum* was not equipped with such sleep-inducing luxuries as Venetian blinds and thick curtains. As a consequence, I usually tossed restlessly most of the night, and then fell asleep just before the hour when I ought to have been crawling out of my bunk with an eye on breakfast.

"Mulhoo," marked X, a native chief, Sanivina, Siberia, and members of his tribe

However I was determined not to miss my first glimpse of the ice fields we had been told lay somewhere ahead, and generally managed to wake myself at the accustomed hour.

We struck our first ice at three in the afternoon of June 23rd. It consisted of heavy, floating chunks. Some of these we crashed through, and some were large enough to cause us to detour respectfully. An hour after we encountered this loose ice, we sighted the floe itself, dead ahead, and apparently quite solid, effectually blocking all progress in that direction. It looked like a vast field of floating ice, consisting of great pieces that moved with a kind of breathing and cracked together with terrific reverberations. Here one felt for the first time the tremendous hostility and strangeness of the North. There was a sense of mystery and futility here that might have been felt by a traveler discovering for the first time an entirely different planet.

After a conference between Captain Winnerlund, Mr. Putta, Dave and myself, we determined to bear to the Northeast, and keep on the skirts of the field, hoping to round the barricade and make Indian Point. Of course happening on the ice just at this stage of the voyage was disappointing,

but one could not altogether regret it, as the sight was magnificent.

Captain Winnerlund and the Mate grumbled, refusing to see its beauties, but I got out my kodak and tried for half an hour to take some snapshots. With so much ice all about us, we were lucky not to fear the additional handicap of darkness. The fog was still with us, though it did not cling so closely about the schooner as formerly, and we could easily see the approach of possible bergs or any new floe in our path.

We had now reached the date which in these latitudes means a lost day. June 24th is dropped ruthlessly from the sea-going calendar, and one falls asleep on the night of the 23rd, to waken on the morning of the 25th. Of course I had often read of this, but actually to experience it seemed decidedly odd.

Finding that we could not make our objective landing either at Indian Point, or Sanivina Straits, on account of the ice barrier, we decided to anchor off Reindeer Point instead, which is situated on the south side of Kayne Island.

Quite early in the morning, the Mate, the Dalmatian sailor, Ivan, and I went ashore in the small dory. We headed for what appeared at a

distance to be a collection of native huts, with a fantastic looking totem pole set up before the largest one. But when we reached the supposed village, we found to our surprise that the "huts" were the bleached skulls of monster whales; and that what we had taken for a totem was the jaw bone of a whale, set firmly upright by men in the solid ice and tundra, where it had frozen as if cemented into rock. It produced a most curious effect.

Farther on we came upon a swiftly rushing stream, a regular mountain torrent, whose water was icy cold and sweet. The surrounding snow and ice, on the contrary, tasted brackish and in places actually salt.

This was my first tramp on Siberian soil, and naturally I found everything about me new and interesting. There were plenty of wild geese and ducks, if we had wished to kill them, also many varieties of water fowl strange to me. On that trip I learned to wish myself naturalist, botanist and geologist, all rolled into one. There were continually points upon which I longed for information that no one in the party was able to supply.

We crossed reindeer tracks several times on the

walk, but saw none of the animals themselves, to my very keen regret. Later on the voyage, when we got up into the country of the Chuvanes, and Cheveracks or Deermen as they are popularly called, I saw vast herds of these reindeer, the property of natives, and herded by children who lived, ate and slept for weeks in the sole company of their placid charges.

We had thought it safer to go ashore armed, as the Reds (Bolsheviki) and whites (Mensiviki) were at war, although we had no reason to fear an attack. With the exception of a very few, none of the natives had been beyond the confines of their little island. The two we first encountered took one astonished look at us, and immediately ran in the opposite direction as fast as their legs could carry them. We were uncertain whether they had never seen white men before, or whether they were prejudiced because of some previous acquaintance.

However, later in the morning, when we were back on the schooner, we spied a little group hovering at the end of the beach, apparently undecided whether to approach or not. So we made friendly signs, beckoning them on board, and holding up such articles as we imagined would

appeal to their fancy. Cautiously they drew nearer, and at last grew bold enough to launch their little skin boats and paddle out to us. They brought us geese and eider duck, and in exchange we gave them their choice of bright-colored trinkets from our trade goods, which seemed to please them mightily, as well as generous gifts of tobacco.

These natives were Eskimos, living entirely upon the products of their island, which is at least a hundred miles from the nearest land that white men ever touch. As I said, few of them have ever been beyond its shores, and of those who have stayed at home probably few had seen either a Russian or American before our visit.

It is always easy to tell an Eskimo even at a distance, because he is so much heavier and more stolid looking than the natives farther North and West, like the Chug-chees and Deermen. In appearance he is oily, fat and lazy looking, moving slowly and phlegmatically—that is, until you see him on a seal hunt. Then he will astonish you by the swiftness and ease of movement with which he can maneuver his skin boat. The Chug-chee is also heavily built. In looks he is somewhere between an Eskimo and a Japanese, and is fond of

tattooing himself—usually on both cheeks but not on the body. Like the Eskimo, he sometimes clips his hair close in a circular patch on top, and lets it grow, half-way down, in an unkept looking bunch about his head. In fact, at first glance, he certainly resembles the kind of creatures which inhabit nightmares and the comic strips of some of the Sunday supplements.

Having traders at Indian Point whom we had not seen since the year before, we soon turned South and started again for the Point. We had a very harassing trip, fighting ice all night, but finally succeeded in anchoring early next morning near the Eskimo village south of our destination, all of us sleepy and weary.

We were not to be allowed to make up lost sleep that day, however, for our anchor had scarcely run out when two skin boats containing several natives paddled out from the beach to inspect us. Our Company's native trader, an Eskimo named Sam Brown, was over on St. Lawrence Island trading reindeer skins for ugruk seal skins. Fortunately he returned the same day our schooner arrived against the ice extending out from the Point, and I went ashore and had a long business pow-wow with him. He was intelligent, and we

seemed to understand each other immediately. He was a full-blooded Eskimo, who had five wives, and a sister all living in the same house. On this occasion, during the absence of their lord and master, the wives had instigated a violent quarrel among themselves, which had ended, quite literally, in their trying to scratch each other's eyes out. It was not exactly a pleasant welcome home for their trader-husband, but perhaps he had been through similar scenes before, since he took the whole business equably enough.

I happened to remember that we had a supply of remarkably pretty beads of colored glass among the trade goods on the *Iskum*—beads that were every bit as artistic and up-to-the-latest fashion as any you would find in a smart Fifth Avenue shop. So on my afternoon trip ashore in the dory, I brought six strings back with me, and ceremoniously presented one to each wife and one to the sister. I made a point of selecting a particularly choice strand—some coral I had bought in the West Indies years before—and gave this to the head wife.

The necklaces made an instant hit, and as a return courtesy, several of the wives insisted that I examine the rest of their jewelry, opening

their fur parkas wide at the throat to let me count as many as fifteen or sixteen strings of different colored beads hung about their necks. This proceeding embarrassed me a trifle at first, but after a few weeks in the Arctic, I learned that it was all according to the best native etiquette.

Their husband, Sam Brown, had the only frame house at Indian Point; the others being skin houses and igloos. The five Mrs. Browns were inclined to be a bit haughty with their friends because of this great social gulf between them. I found that in addition to being in our employ as a trader, Sam was also head chief of all the Indian Point tribe, which is the largest Eskimo settlement in Siberia, excepting the settlement perched upon the high black bluff which forms East Cape, on the Western side of Behring Straits.

Sam was remarkably shrewd in business deals, made a good chief for his people, and attended to practically all the buying and selling in that corner of Siberia. We were lucky to have secured the services of such a man for our station, as otherwise he could have deflected much valuable business from us to other companies with representatives in the same region.

Some time previously, the Hudson's Bay Com-

"Sam Brown," an Eskimo chief at Indian Point. Two of his five wives, one son and two daughters, and one sister (on the extreme left)

pany had entered into negotiations between London, and Moscow, Vladivostok and Petrograd whereby they were to get the entire trade of what is known throughout Russia as the Dalneshtorg, a society organized for coöperating all trading in far-eastern and northeastern Siberia and Russia. This of course gave the Hudson's Bay people an enormous advantage over the rest of us at that time. It was directly after this monopoly was given, that the seizure of American trading vessels in those waters by the Russians began.

Mr. Hughes, our Secretary of State, had just declined to recognize Soviet Russia, while Lloyd George had already recognized them commercially, although not for diplomatic or governmental purposes. That had gone a long way with the Russians, and inclined them to turn their trade toward British channels.

The Hudson's Bay Company eventually closed up this monopoly just before our own schooner, the *Iskum*, was seized by the Bolshevists—but all that happened the year after the time of which I write, and I must not get ahead of my story.

When I returned to the schooner after my visit to the Brown household (thanks to the beads, I left a most seraphic peace behind me, in place of the

noisy strife of my introduction), I found the *Iskum* literally swarming with Eskimos. They had paddled out in their skin boats during my absence, and were making an excited tour of exploration.

Some of them wanted trinkets of various sorts, but most of the trades were for sugar, bread, or chewing gum, the last being apparently the most popular article we had on board.

When we left Indian Point, we took Sam Brown with us. We knew he would be of real help with the Eskimos all along our route to East Cape. Then too, he could take a hand on the schooner at practically anything. We also brought away a little Eskimo boy by the name of Allee, who, with his father, had been a sled runner during the winter between Indian Point and one of our main stations at Sanivina Straits. He was a cunning little fellow, Allee; quick as a steel trap. But he was certainly a regular question box regarding the workings of the schooner, and would bring his inquiries to whomever chanced to be nearest, regardless of whether it was one of the sailors, Dave or myself. When we ran short of any mutual language, we usually managed to get along quite satisfactorily with signs and pointings.

From Indian Point we headed for our Sanivina Station, but having already visited Kayne Island, and explored quite thoroughly the southern shore, we realized that we could never make Sanivina from the south on account of the ice blockade. Accordingly we detoured almost into the middle of Behring Sea, and then sailed west. Even so, arriving at the northerly entrance to the Straits, we found to our bitter disappointment that it was completely blocked by ice.

While we were debating what was to be done next, somebody on the schooner suddenly discovered the figure of a native on the shore of the mainland, who was evidently signaling to us. I got out my glasses and was able to make out that he had five dogs and a sled with him. He was trying to make us understand that we must maneuver the *Iskum* as close to the edge of the floe as possible.

CHAPTER IV

AN ICE JOURNEY

AFTER some trouble we did succeed in working through the outer edges of the floe. During this interval, the native on shore got his sled and dogs down to the ice and made his way out to meet us.

The distance from shore to schooner was, I should judge roughly, about half a mile, but eventually we helped our visitor on board. He was a fine specimen of a savage in build, though he had anything but a handsome countenance. His strong, perfectly proportioned body, however, made me think at once of that wonderful statue of Michael Angelo's "David" which has always been a sort of obsession of mine. So that as our new acquaintance's real name was unpronounceable, I referred to him thereafter as "David,"—a rechristening he accepted with calm stolidity.

We found he knew stray bits of English. He also used an especially illuminating brand of sign

This chap I named for Michael Angelo's "David." He managed one of our dog-teams

language, with which we soon established communications. He gave us to understand that he had come out from the Sanivina station on purpose to meet us; that from the distance they had seen our two masts sticking up over the rim of the ice, like poles, and felt sure it must be a schooner—they hoped the *Iskum*—so "David" had volunteered to take his dogs and find us.

The station itself was some seven miles away, and apparently the going would be better and decidedly easier on the ice with the sled, than in an attempt to make the trip along shore, across the irregular ground and frozen hummocks. Finally it was arranged that "David" should take me on ahead aboard his dog sled, and that Sam Brown and Allee should follow us on foot.

The temperature was about zero—cold for a June day even in that region—so I bundled up warmly in furs, seated myself on the sled, and we started. It was my first ride of this kind, and I confess I enjoyed it as keenly as any youngster could have done.

I took my six-shooter and some ammunition with me, and also loaded the sled with a large package of illustrated magazines, papers and mail for Parsons, our trader at the Sanivina station

who had been shut up there for 10 months. Behind us, as we set out, we saw the *Iskum* working herself free of the loose ice and backing out to a more secure mooring ground to await our return.

It was about three o'clock in the morning when we started, and we reached the station at seven. We got there just in time to wake Parsons and his Eskimo cook from their last before-breakfast nap.

There is a faint glow all night in this latitude which grows brighter and brighter until July, in which month the sun never sinks below the horizon. As this was the end of June, it was already pretty light all night long, which explains our setting out for the station at such an early hour. Furthermore I particularly wanted to have the whole day on shore to go over the station with Parsons, discuss the general situation, and look at his books.

I suppose after years in the Arctic the miracle of that twenty-four-hour summery day may come to be accepted as commonplace, as we accept the sunrise and sunset glories at home. But I was fresh to all these northern phenomena, and could not overcome my interest in seeing the great red ball of the sun dip lower and lower to the horizon, where it remained apparently *stationary*, for about

an hour during which time a bright red glow illuminated ice, sea and sky. Then the flaming disc would slowly start on its upward climb again.

Our trip across the ice was fairly uneventful, though we had occasional slips and slides, not to mention some trouble with crevasses which had opened from the pressure of the floes driving in toward shore ahead of tide and wind. We met a large party of native hunters who were camped out there on the ice, about half way from the shore, and who were friendly enough to direct us how to avoid the worst places ahead.

We found Parsons quite well, and of course delighted to have news again from the outside world. The station was, as is usual with all trading posts, fairly overrun with natives. These fellows can never be prevented from hanging about lazily all day, smoking, gossiping, and generally cluttering up everything. However, it is necessary to keep on friendly terms with them since to some extent we rely on their good will for trade, and outside of being rather a nuisance and taking up more than their share of room, they do no actual harm.

Parsons lived entirely alone at the Station, except for the natives who came and went, but he

seemed comfortable enough, and not at all discontented. We spent the greater part of the day checking up the Station's accounts together and talking over the outlook for the next season. That night, as there was only one bed at the Station,—Parsons'—and having declined his kindly offer of that, I made myself a luxurious couch of reindeer skins on the floor, where I slept as well as I ever have at home or elsewhere on a thick hair mattress and box springs.

The next morning we decided to send Sam Brown back to the schooner with the dog sled, and seven bundles of fine ugruk skins. The ugruk is the largest species of hair seal. These often run to 10 or even 12 feet in length, and average from 8 to 9 feet. Shooting an ugruk as he rises out of the sea with his big head and gray beard is like killing old Father Time.

Sam was to return in the afternoon, bringing Dave Rutherford with him, to help in the work of checking up the station—not a very quick or easy task.

The dog sled, bringing Dave and some supplies we needed from the schooner, arrived at the station about five o'clock. We set to work at once on the checking up, and kept at it doggedly until two in

the morning. I heaved a sigh of relief when it was over. That was a part of the business I had really come to oversee, and it was by far the least interesting part.

The ugruk skins which we had sent out to the schooner were destined to be used for trading again in the far Siberian Arctic, as the natives value them highly for clothing purposes, ropes, boats and so forth. We knew they would bring good trade farther north.

Among the natives themselves—that is, between Eskimo and Chug-chee, and Chug-chee and Deermen—there is always a certain amount of intertribal trading going on, as well as with the Russians. All natives are also eager to trade with Americans when they come. Then, too, a considerable trade is taken over to Nome, which is used in re-trading up the Yukon River, and to other points in Alaska.

The next day we finished the big check-up at the station, and loaded three more dog sleds with ugruk, muckluks, and winter seal, which we despatched to the schooner. When the sleds returned, we packed them with still a third load, and Dave, Sam Brown, Allee and I returned to the *Iskum*, taking my Michael Angelo's "David"

with us, as he had begged to accompany the schooner into the Arctic.

We were also fortunate in picking up an interpreter, who was to prove invaluable to us during the rest of the trip. This was a native named Kolingo—half Chug-chee and half Eskimo—who lived at some little distance from the station. He was quite a character, and we found him a man to be relied on sincere, truthful, and far above the average native in intelligence. He was a real find.

We were forced to jump some bad ice breaks on the way back; an exciting business, at least for a staid American lawyer who had done nothing similar since hockey days. Once the lead dog jumped short and went through, dragging the rest of the team after him, and we had a wild time getting the wet, fighting, struggling creatures out, especially as they were all tangled up in their soaking skin-rope harness.

We reached the schooner safely, however, although some of us, after acting as a life-saving crew, were nearly as wet as the dogs. Certainly we were thankful for the cabin stove and for the bowls of hot soup and coffee.

CHAPTER V

INTO THE ARCTIC, AND IGLOOS

FROM Sanivina we proceeded to Loren, which was, as we had feared, ice-bound. Loren is situated on a butte about three hundred feet high, on the East shore of the Chukotsk Peninsula, the most Easterly part of Siberia. The town is composed of two or three Russian trading houses, and a group of Eskimo igloos.

The schooner could not approach nearer than three miles; and as the going across the intervening ice was too rough for us to attempt by walking, we regretfully looked over at the tiny village, and then continued on our way to South Head, our next objective. South Head is another high Promontory, farther North toward East Cape. I mention this because most of these points cannot be found on any map, and are unknown to the outside world.

At South Head we were once more blocked by ice, but finally were able to go on shore, where we

found a number of refugee Russians living in very hard straits. One woman was very ill, lying upon an improvised bed in a native skin-hut. The natives had been kind to the best of their ability, but their knowledge of medical care being practically *nil*, the poor soul was in a serious condition when we appeared.

It turned out that she and her husband were from Kolyma, where they had trouble with the Bolsheviks, and had escaped down the coast to where we found them. The Kolymas, by the way, were among the penal colonies of Russia. Many of the exiles were political offenders, and the rest were mostly composed of real criminals.

Among the various types congregated there, all suffering the sentence of banishment from whatever place they called home, there were many educated and gently bred people. We ran across a number of them who—freed by the Revolution—were trying to work their way to some port where they could find a vessel to take them back to the world of civilization again.

Some of them spoke French perfectly, knew a little English, and were familiar with Greek and Latin. Apparently their only crime had been a view not tolerated by the old autocracy. Nat-

A stop on the shore ice to rest dogs. 10 P. M.

urally, they were bitter toward the Imperial Government which had sent them into exile originally; but they were no less bitter toward the criminality, stupidity and flagrant lawlessness of the men who called themselves Bolshevists and had succeeded the Romanoff régime—although for the most part, these so-called officials were outlaws and not trusted by the real Bolshevists who claimed to be readjusting the region upon safe and sane lines.

So far as we could learn, the case of the exiles had been made harder by the Revolution, rather than improved. The Russian couple we met at South Head seemed to typify a case in point. They had obviously seen better and gentler days; the woman, at least, seemed to have come from a family of more than ordinary refinement and education. They did not volunteer their story, and we asked no questions—one doesn't in the Far North. Lack of proper nourishment, worry, and the hardships undergone in their flight from Kolyma, had seriously undermined the wife's health, which could never—from the fragile, highly strung look of her—have been robust. Her husband appeared to have stood the privations and exposure better, but there was an expression in both

pairs of eyes that told of past suffering, mental as well as physical.

The woman, in particular, was full of interest in America, and in spite of her weak condition, asked me a hundred questions, as if she would never tire of hearing about a world outside the small and cheerless one in which she now lived. We did what little we could for her, and gave her a supply of such medicines as we had with us on the schooner. She seemed more comfortable, and a good deal encouraged by her talk with us, but we left her with a feeling of real sadness—for she seemed a tragic figure, facing a no less tragic future.

During their stay at South Head, her husband had acquired forty-five fox skins and we made a trade for them, he agreeing to hold them until our return trip.

From South Head the schooner proceeded to North Head, which is another high butte of land, (not on the maps) separated from the opposite mainland by a bay thirty miles wide—a Bay so-called, but in reality, an almost solid ice field at all times.

At North Head there was a trading station conducted by a Russian named Karieff. In fact,

there were two Karieffs here—brothers—who were very well known, and extremely powerful all through that part of Siberia, monopolizing most of the fur trade with the natives. Their sway reached into the Arctic, to and beyond Cape Nord; but for some reason—probably because of their wealth and acquired power—they were out of favor with the Bolshevist Government, and seemed in a fair way to lose everything they had so carefully built up.

We went ashore and visited their station, where they received us with the utmost hospitality, in spite of our rival interests. The natives had brought in a huge seal and a walrus, and we were much entertained and interested by watching them skin the animals.

This was particularly remarkable in the matter of the walrus skinning, for the natives take one of the big walrus bulls whose hide is sometimes two full inches thick, with deep creases in it, and by dextrously splitting it, contrive to divide it into two, and sometimes (if it is a specially thick one, and the workers ultra-skilful) into three serviceable hides.

Seeing our interest, one of them undertook to explain the process to us in the queerest jumble of

broken English and sign language that it had ever been my good fortune to meet. A smile and nod of the head, to show we were following, was all the encouragement he required, and off he would go on another tangent of his tale—his broad, oily face wreathed in a complacent grin.

Of course, we made each of the skinners a trifling present from our trade goods, in acknowledgment of the pleasure their performance and explanation had given us. After that there was no doubt in anyone's mind about the pleasure being entirely mutual.

From North Head we sailed direct to Dezhneva, which is the Russian settlement on the south side of East Cape—the latter being a peninsula, the apex of which is just opposite Cape Prince of Wales in Alaska. The actual point of East Cape is a black rock some seven miles across, rising to an altitude of more than 2600 feet, and almost perpendicular. On the side of the apex, or point, directly facing the Big Diomede Island and the Straits, there is a comparatively flat patch of land—or rather, of hard, black granite rock—and on this sloping surface are perched precariously two large Eskimo villages, composed entirely of igloos. These villages are by far the largest—and they are also the last—

of all the Siberian Eskimo settlements. A deep ravine divides the two nests of igloos, although they are accessible to each other by dint of some rather difficult climbing.

You usually find the Eskimo building his igloo along the shore, as he makes his scanty living entirely off the sea creatures encountered there, such as seal, walrus, and occasional fish. The Siberian natives farther west place their igloos farther from shore; and the Deermen are found mostly inland, since they rely on their great reindeer herds for food, clothing and barter, although they also hunt bear and fox.

Back of those Eskimo villages, on the south side of the peninsula, was the Russian settlement for which we were headed: Dezhneva. This place, true to the Arctic habit of disappointing the weary traveler by sea, by barring her gates against him, was ice-bound. However we were used to inhospitable welcomes now, and tried to adopt a more or less philosophical attitude toward each succeeding disappointment.

Besides, there was one consolation. If we could not get into Dezhneva on account of ice conditions, we could probably make Whalen, over on the other side of the Cape. For when the south side was

ice-bound it was pretty certain to be free of ice on the Whalen side. This was because the same wind that piled up the ice on the South Shore of the Cape served to drive it away from the North Shore.

Accordingly we rounded the Cape, and just as we had hoped, found it clear of ice. The sea was like glass, with a long, smooth swell coming in from the north, which seemed to beat with the evenness and regularity of a pulse. It was about one o'clock in the morning. The sun hung on the horizon like a gigantic golden ball, half out of sight over the edge of the world. It seemed to have been in that identical position for the past two hours.

East Cape was on our left; with the large Diomede Island to the right of us, looking exactly like a big, round pound cake, frosted with ice and snow. From where we were, the Cape itself resembled another big island, and the whole scene had a strange effect of the schooner's having glided effortlessly into an unknown and different world. We were in the actual Arctic Ocean, where nothing is the same except the sun and moon, and they behave differently.

At one-thirty the sun dropped entirely below

the horizon, leaving a half-twilight, but reappeared promptly and started on its upward climb once more. In its light the two masses of igloos forming the twin villages on East Cape were plainly visible without glasses, as was also Cape Prince of Wales over on the Alaskan side, with a faint view of the little Diomede.

As we expected to make Whalen about eight in the morning, I reluctantly went below for some sleep. The barometer, which I glanced at before going to my bunk, showed a steady falling, and the temperature was up to 38 above—high, considering the presence of ice in our near vicinity.

We made Whalen a little ahead of time. There was a field of old, solidly-packed ice stretching a mile out from shore, which rendered our landing from the schooner tiresome and difficult. However, we managed to make our way over it, and were met in a most friendly fashion by a Russian named Gasdaroff, who undertook to show us about.

The headquarters of the government for the Chukotsk Peninsula (so far as there is a government) is at Whalen, and we were much interested in inspecting Government House, which is built according to the usual Russian ideas for preserving things—ponderous, heavy iron doors; closets and

chests lined with iron sheathing to make them doubly secure; and other interesting barriers of iron and metal designed for the same purpose, scattered lavishly throughout the structure.

The house itself had been taken over by the Revolutionists at the time Bischoff was governor, but the latter had fled to Nome about six weeks before our arrival. From what I heard he had won his way to the governorship by intrigue, and had never possessed any authority from Petrograd for assuming the office. Petrograd was a long distance from Dezhneva, and many things which happened in that part of Siberia were either not known to, or deliberately ignored by, the Imperial government: in which course it was probably wise, making a virtue of necessity.

There were three or four Russian houses at Whalen, built of material brought there on Russian gun boats in the days of the Empire. Up to the time of the Revolution, a gun boat was sent north once a year, from Petropavlovski or Vladivostok, to inspect the penal colonies and minister to the actual necessities of prisoners and natives. This yearly aid however, had ceased entirely with the fall of the Empire.

The rest of the village of Whalen was composed

of igloos. Gasdaroff saw that I was interested, and took us into several of these curious dwellings, so that I might see how the natives lived.

Later on the trip I also visited a number of igloos of both the Chug-chees and the Deermen, and found that in the main essentials they were much alike, except that those of the Eskimos and Deermen are larger than those built by the Chug-chees.

There is practically no lumber or wood of any kind along the north shore of the Siberian Arctic, except for a little that works down the Kolyma or other Siberian rivers. It finds its way from there through open leads and finally, aided by the Arctic currents that set eastward, is flung back against the coast as driftwood. However, this is far too rare an occurrence to be counted upon by the natives to furnish building material; so Eskimo, Chug-chee and Deermen alike, in constructing their igloos, make use of almost anything that comes to hand.

The jawbone of a big whale comes into play nicely for this purpose; and so do bleached bones, spliced and bound together, or hardened walrus hide. I have seen all of these wood-substitutes used to make the center-poles for igloos, and though

to the unaccustomed eye of the outsider they may look peculiar, they appear perfectly satisfactory from a native standpoint.

(I am speaking now, of course, of the igloo built for a permanent home, not of the temporary ice igloo made by the Chug-chee or the native farther west when out on the ice, away from his village, hunting polar bear, walrus or seal. Sometimes, however, a permanent ice house for family use is built, like the one shown in the illustration.)

The general type of igloo is built up from the outside, with skins (a good deal like the circular wall of itinerant circus tents at home), to the center-pole. If the skins are exceptionally large and heavy—walrus hides, or the skins of the ugruk seal—they need no extra support. But if lighter skins are used they can be stiffened with whalebone or other substitute. These hides are then firmly bound down in place with strips of native skin-rope, cut from either walrus hide or seal skin, and tanned by the native method which renders them pliable yet immensely strong.

The winds up in that part of the world are so severe that the entire igloo, when finished, is tethered carefully by more skin-ropes with rocks at their ends, so that it cannot be blown away.

A Siberian Arctic ice house, built by an American with native help

The opening of the igloo is as small as an ordinary fireplace, and is generally set some two feet or so above the ground. The occupants, therefore, step up and over to enter—or rather, they *bend* in.

The interior is divided into two compartments, by means of a row of what one might call portières, made for the most part of reindeer hides, though sometimes the skins of polar bear and wolf are used. Winter skins are employed for this purpose —that is, the long-haired pelts—and are hung from the roof across the center of the igloo, where they reach to within eight or nine inches of the gravelly, dirt floor. On this floor, just under the curtains and high enough to overlap their ends, a sill made of two thicknesses of heavy walrus hide set upon edge is built, making a separate and private apartment of the inner half of the igloo. The latter then becomes the combined sleeping, living and smoking room of the whole family. It is ventilated by a hole in the roof, though not immediately over that compartment.

In the outer compartment, hung neatly about on bone hooks, pegs, or over skin-ropes, are the fur parkas, rifles, and personal possessions of the inmates. With these are also hung dried fish, seal (usually very ancient and odoriferous) and dried

reindeer meat. The whole *ensemble* combines to create a decidedly strong aroma in the igloo, to say the least.

No strangers are allowed in the back room of the dwelling; and because of the heat of their heavy outer garments, the natives see nothing amiss in frankly and unashamedly dropping them at the fur-portières, and retiring into their inner sanctum in the sartorial fashion set by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

Customs are merely a matter of locality, and I found, in spite of their naïve ideas on indoor wearing apparel—or the lack of it—that the natives who came under my direct observation were a moral, decent-living people, according to their lights.

During my stay in Whalen, and my visits to some of the villages to the northwest, the natives got the idea that the "man with the white hair" was some kind of doctor, and were constantly sending for me to treat sore eyes and snow blindness (which they suffer from frequently), and various other ailments. My white hair seemed a pass-port, as well as a curiosity to them, and I was invariably allowed to enter the curtained-off inner apartment on my visits. Naturally, in this way,

Eskimo house, Siberia

I got a good deal of first-hand information as to their lives and habits.

We had murine on the schooner and I brought a quantity ashore. After bathing the poor creatures' eyes, and dropping the murine in, we taught the more intelligent older women how to carry on the treatment. Dave also turned "doctor." He had plenty of Sloan's liniment with which to rub swollen joints and the like. It was pathetic to see how grateful our patients were, and how humbly and implicitly they obeyed orders. I am glad to be able to say that this crude "doctoring" was effective in many cases, and served to relieve temporarily even those who were past curing—a realization which more than compensated us for the not-too-pleasant work involved.

In this inner room, which acts, as I have said, as combination living room, smoking- and bedroom, I found that the family were apt to divide themselves off into separate and distinct groups. The old people withdrew to one side, while the women, girls and children formed another unit. The young, and middle-aged men could usually be found sprawled lazily together in a third group, smoking their pipes, at the extreme back of the apartment.

Beside the latter group there was generally a

primus, or native stone lamp. This allowed the smokers to light their pipes from time to time without moving from their comfortable positions on the oily or flesh side of the skins that covered the floor. Their oily smooth bodies seemed to blend with the oily skins.

The native lamp consisted of a stone bowl from six to eight inches in diameter, shaped up at one side into a sort of aperture. The seal oil was poured into the bowl, and rose through a small hole into this aperture. The oil was lighted at the top of the hole, and the flame flared up—a bit smoky, but with plenty of vigor.

I found that the smokers—and that term includes most of the native women as well as men—used chiefly Black Navy American tobacco in their pipes. They got it, of course, from the traders. Before the day of American traders in the Siberian Arctic, the natives, when they could not get Russian tobacco, picked and dried a kind of herb that grows between the rocks. Occasionally too they used seaweed.

The strong tobacco smoke, mingled with all the other widely diversified odors, was pretty bad in the crowded and badly ventilated inner apartment. I was glad my visits came after the days when the

stench of burning dried seaweed in the pipes would have added still another ingredient to the general conglomeration.

I usually found from five to as many as seventeen natives—this included numerous children, of course—all as innocent of clothing as when they were born, lying about on the skin floor. They remained in their separate groups, smoking and chatting unconcernedly. We were given to understand it was a great compliment to our supposed skill as medicine men, that we were allowed to come and go in the family apartment. I found these people a curious mixture of shrewdness and simple trustfulness, like overgrown children whose bodies have outstripped the growth of their brains—except for occasional and unexpected flashes. They were usually canny enough, however, when it was a question of trade.

I will confess that my ideas about the natives of this part of the world had been hazy in the extreme, when I set out on this voyage. I had known they were a polygamous people, but I did not realize that the system would work out as amicably as it apparently did—the whole happy family, with several wives (anywhere from one to nine, according to the man's ability to provide for them) and

their respective children, living matter-of-factly together in the same igloo. Nor was there more than the average amount of quarreling any normal family might be excused for indulging in.

And, by the way, a native igloo village is the greatest place I ever saw for children and dogs. You never enter one anywhere but you find two or three women to every man; four, five or even six children to every woman; and dogs galore everywhere. The dogs however are never allowed inside the "portières," and rarely inside the igloos themselves except in severe weather.

When I speak of dogs, I am not referring to the sled dogs, which are what one might term the aristocrats of Arctic dogdom. They are never taken into the igloos. For one thing, they are apt to be extremely vicious, except just after feeding, and would not tolerate the mauling and petting which native children lavish on the commoner species.

The sled dogs are generally kept tied to a rock or big bone driven in the icy ground. They are tethered individually along a main rope by shorter leashes, just far enough apart to permit freedom of movement, yet preventing the otherwise inevitable fighting.

The native, when driving a dog team, does not use a whip, but employs what seems to me a far crueler method of urging speed. This is a stick made of bone—or wood when available—very heavy, and sharp at the end, sometimes tipped with a metal spike. If a dog "soldiers" on the job, the driver will throw this bone spike directly at his head, but in such a manner that it strikes sidewise and not with the point. A less dextrous throw might easily result in the death of the dog, but I have never seen the missile fail to land as it was intended to do, although I have seen the dogs' heads bleeding from such blows.

After watching one or two of these exhibitions, I absolutely forbade stick-throwing at any of our sled dogs, and saw to it that my orders were carried out. Probably the natives pitied me for a soft-heart, but the practice was a little more than my American ideas of humanity could stand.

Another and legitimate use of the bone-spike is for steering and breaking the sled on slippery ice. The end can be dug down sharply into the snow or ice surface, and the sled brought to a smart halt, or steered expertly around a dangerous turn.

Years ago in Alaska I heard the drivers urging on their dog teams with the cry "*mush-mush-*

mush," which is equivalent to our own "Gid-ap!" The Chug-chee drivers called "*Chug-chug-chug*," or "*Uk-uk-uk*," or "*Frog-frog-frog*," which seem interchangeable and meant the same thing—"hurry up—more speed, there!" At all events they were always perfectly understood by the animals thus addressed, and it was not long before I had learned to "*Chug-chug-chug*" or "*Frog-frog-frog*" with the rest of them, when crossing rough ice.

CHAPTER VI

DRIVEN BACK BY ICE

A TRADING schooner in the North is a good deal like Christmas to the natives; and when the news of our arrival had spread (and news travels with mysterious rapidity in the Arctic, regardless of the lack of telephone and telegraph lines), we were besieged by visitors who wished to come on board. They were mainly Chugchees, though there was a sprinkling of Eskimos among them. During our stay at Whalen they continued to arrive by squads and entire companies.

The trouble was that the first callers never rose to leave with the arrival of the second batch, and before long the *Iskum's* deck was so crowded with heavy, fur-clad bodies, sprawled about in groups, that at times it was almost impossible for us to move about.

If their visit coincided with mealtime (and it nearly always did), they remained expectantly,

their round, oily faces so full of a kindly, childish anticipation that it would have taken much harder hearts than any of our outfit possessed, to drive them off unfed.

The task of feeding this great number of self-invited guests was rather staggering at first glance. It presented a difficulty we solved only by closing the hatch to provide a "table," on which a great copper kettle of soup was set out, containing reindeer meat, bear meat, some fish, and usually the bones of Arctic duck and other water fowl with bits of meat left on them. This, together with added flour, bread and hard biscuits, blended in a stew that made a decided hit with the natives.

Alongside this stew or soup, whichever one chooses to call it, we placed another big cauldron filled with hot tea of which all natives are inordinately fond. On the other side of the soup pot we put a huge box of pilot bread, and then stood back and watched the feast.

We passed around tin or enamel cups (natives are particularly taken with enamel ware, and demand it in trade whenever they can get it) for the tea-drinking as far as our supply held out, which usually wasn't far enough. Of course we

Self-invited natives making short work of an Arctic stew

had a number of boxes of the enamel ware in the cargo for barter, but it would have been too much trouble to have located and opened these; so our visitors had to share cups in what was, I am afraid, a highly unsanitary manner according to the standards of more southerly latitudes. However, the sanitary code of our Arctic guests was fortunately more elastic, and a cup or so between friends was perfectly proper in their eyes.

It was something of a sight to see anywhere between fifty and a hundred natives industriously making inroads on such a repast with incredible rapidity; and—if the water around the schooner were fairly clear of ice at the time—the ship presented somewhat the appearance of a small island in the midst of a solid sea of native skin boats of every conceivable make and size, stretching out from the schooner on both sides and far to the rear, which were waiting for their owners to finish their feast and go ashore.

As a rule, when the business of eating was at an end, most of the callers returned to their boats, and paddled home. But if there was anything of interest going on aboard, such as the opening of boxes of rifles and ammunition, with the entrancing prospect of trading, the middle-aged and older

men promptly sat down again on the deck and waited to take part in the next number on the program. The women, too, waited to see if there was a chance of acquiring additional strings of bright beads of a different pattern or design from those they already possessed. They proudly opened their fur parkas at the throat, and pointed to you to look inside and see what a vast collection of vividly colored wealth they owned. I found out afterward that these bead necklaces were not usually worn in such numbers by the women, except when the trading schooner or visiting strangers arrived, who were to be duly impressed with the importance and affluence of the wearer.

We were interested to hear that Amundsen's *Maud*, in charge of her crew, was not far from us, up in the Arctic to the westward somewhere between Whalen and Natan. While we were ice-bound at Whalen the man who had the care of Amundsen's sled dogs heard of our arrival and traveled a number of miles to call on us.

Naturally we were glad to see him, and entertained him aboard the schooner with the best our stores provided. Afterwards we returned with him to the *Maud* to offer any assistance or supplies the crew might need. We found them

well provided, except for the need of a chat with someone more recently from the outside.

My only regret about this little side trip, was that Amundsen himself was not aboard, as I should have enjoyed meeting him. A friendship with Admiral Peary, and other men of the Arctic, had bred in me an almost insatiable curiosity about, and interest in, all things relating to the far North. As I had speculated a good deal on Amundsen's project of drifting across the Pole with the moving ice, I would have welcomed eagerly the opportunity to have heard him talk about it. However, it was something to have actually seen his ship, and talked to the men with whom he was associated in the venture.

While at Whalen I had another pleasant, but amusingly different experience; that of taking a real Russian bath—a God-send to anyone in our situation. I happened to remark in the presence of a Russian I met ashore, a man named Astrosoff, that the bathing facilities of the *Iskum* were more or less primitive. I told him I missed my daily tub more than any other comfort of civilization on the voyage. He promptly invited me to his house, and there put me through all the processes of a genuine Russian bath; a decidedly novel

performance, inasmuch as it was strictly a home-made affair, though most ingenious. The hot water spouts were made of old gun barrels, and all the other devices and gadgets contrived quite wonderfully from similarly irrelevant material.

I felt a new man when I left his house, and only wished I could have taken his Russian bath aboard the schooner. We did have the pleasure of taking Astrosoff and his wife with us, however, as they were anxious to find a means of reaching Kolyma; and when one desires to travel in the Arctic one accepts a "lift" in any vessel journeying in the desired direction, whether it is actually bound for the exact port or not. Every few miles in the right general direction help, especially when one is traveling in a region entirely lacking in schedules and dependable lines. I know of patient travelers who have taken more than a year to reach a desired spot, though the distance might very well have been covered in a few weeks of straight voyaging, if that had been possible.

We also took with us a third passenger, of about as different character from the Astrosoffs as can be imagined. This was a Russian Communist by the name of Andria—I never learned to say the rest of his name. It was too much of a tongue-twister.

Andria wanted to go West—to almost any point we cared to take him. He was not particular about his destination, apparently; only about his departure, which he desired to make speedy and inconspicuous. He gave as his reason that he was a hunter and trapper, but as the Bolsheviki were at that time assiduously hunting the Whites, or Mensaviki, in that part of the world, we privately decided that he might have other reasons. Still, it was not our particular business, so we consented to give him a lift on his way.

Andria was a rather remarkable person. He was always bright, always dirty, always carried his gun by his side (he was an excellent shot); and always slept—in his clothes—down in the engine room, next to the engine, for warmth. He could tuck himself into a space hardly as wide as his own body, between the pipes of the engine, and the bottom of the gasoline tank. The atmosphere must have been suffocating down there, and the gasoline fumes unpleasant—to put it mildly. But Andria did not seem to care. He had chosen his bed, and he stuck it out there until we landed him many miles farther to the westward, a number of weeks later.

I took quite a fancy to him, however, as he

proved himself very resourceful not only with his rifle, but with practical advice about the ways of the country as well. But I could not help occasionally reflecting upon the vast gulf between our Communist passenger and the Astrosoffs, particularly whenever I chanced to see Mr. Astrosoff and Andria standing near each other on deck. The Astrosoffs had but recently made their escape from the rifles and knives of Andria's friends and could not have entertained any very amicable feelings toward the Communist. But nothing of this appeared in their manner toward him. They treated him as they did the crew of the schooner, though I noticed that Madame Astrosoff, at least, never glanced directly at him if she could avoid doing so without calling attention to her reluctance.

We pursued a fixed course with the hostiles. When more than one Bolsheviki or Mensaviki came aboard they were requested to deposit their arms with us until their departure. They never refused and never fought, though they were together as our guests upon different occasions.

On the Fourth of July we observed, hopefully, that the ice which had held us prisoner for several days at Whalen was beginning to move. The flag had been run up and notwithstanding adverse

reports from the natives, we determined to make the attempt to reach our station at Kaluchin by working through the ice. We felt that Independence Day should bring good luck.

We did succeed in reaching Cape Serd (referred to by the Russians and generally charted as Cape Serdzekamen), but just beyond it we came upon what looked like an impenetrable sea of ice, the outer part of which was broken and rugged, showing that it was likely to be on the move, even while the inner part lay flat and solid before us.

As we now had Astrosoff and his wife, and their cargo of soft bales of Russian leaf tobacco and other merchandise, which they were transporting to Kolyma, the schooner had a decided overload on her deck. This rendered her "tender," and caused us some misgivings in attempting a trip out into the Arctic Sea for the purpose of passing around the ice field that lay ahead of us.

In order to keep free of the ice, it was necessary to turn to the southward, and go about the ice projections northeasterly from Cape Serd. Reaching the open sea, we ran into quite a blow. The schooner pitched about a good deal, and poor Madame Astrosoff was taken so violently ill that

we had to bring her up on deck and tie her to the cargo lashings, so she would not roll overboard. The fresh air relieved her before long, though perhaps the gradual dying down of the gale, and the subsequent quieting of the heavy seas were really responsible for her recovery.

We ran north for twenty miles, but found the solid ice still ahead of us, so the following morning we turned to a southerly course again, and came back eastward of Cape Serd. By ten that day we were forced back to East Cape. Poor Madame Astrosoff became ill again, owing to the rolling of the schooner on her new course.

After some consultation we decided to return to Karieff's headquarters on the South side of East Cape, as we remembered that one of his men had said there were a hundred fox skins in the possession of some native in Karieff's employ, which might be had at favorable terms in barter. It seemed worth looking into, especially as we had been forced back to that locality willy-nilly, and we thought we might as well profit by it if possible.

That is what a trader in these waters must be constantly on the lookout to find; small, but profitable barters here and there along his course, since they accumulate in the end into a bigger total

than the more spectacular trades he is always hoping to make.

Later we learned that this talk of fox skins had been merely a clever ruse on the part of a Russian trader, hoping to delay our efforts to round the ice barrier. If we had been successful in being the first to reach the Kolyma River district (as we should have, except for being forced so far off our course by the ice), we could have had first chance at many skins and other barter.

That, however, is the way the game must be played in the Arctic: fight the ice with muscle, brains and such maneuverings as you can, then take defeat with a grin when you must back up and work warily to your starting point. It is a game of wits that breaks weaklings and breeds men—judging by the specimens I have met in that part of the world.

Arriving at South Head, we were able this time to make a landing, and after mooring the schooner to the ice, went ashore in search of Karieff's native with the hundred fox skins. Unfortunately, he had gone to Emma Harbor—or possibly somewhere else equally unreachable at the moment, and another hope went the way of hopes and plans in the Arctic.

There were two trading schooners in the harbor before Karieff's store on our return, both competitors, which meant that we had lost our lead in the race north. Amundsen's *Maud*, which we had visited on our first call at Dezhneva, had gone around to the eastward of Cape Serd for a supply of dog meat.

CHAPTER VII

CAPE ZERD, WRANGELL ISLAND, AND WALRUS

ON the whole, it seemed best to remain at South Head for the Arctic ice to open, instead of returning to East Cape. Astrosoff, the Russian, and I spent our spare time trying to teach each other our respective languages. Most of the Russians up there were exceedingly anxious to learn English. They seem natural linguists, and easily picked up a workable smattering of phrases. Astrosoff and I began with the two alphabets, but as his had thirty-six letters to my twenty-six, and most of them quite unpronounceable to an Anglo-Saxon tongue, it hardly seemed a fair exchange. However, we got a good deal of amusement out of it.

When drifting with the ice, the sea, of course, could not kick up much of a fuss, and I formed the habit of taking advantage of those times of enforced inaction to catch up on lost sleep, usually turning in by nine at the latest. On this occasion,

what with our strenuous entertaining of natives, our discouraging struggle with the barrier ice, and my own voluntary wrestling with Russian consonants, I found myself quite ready for a little extra sleep whenever it could be snatched from more pressing matters.

Our Chug-chee friends continued to come aboard, for the purposes of barter and refreshment, and to have sore eyes treated by the "Medicine Man with white hair."

We had not come prepared for quite such wholesale clinical work, and our supply of murine, as well as our castile soap, was running low. It simply wasn't possible to refuse the poor creatures what relief we could afford them; they were so ignorant, friendly, and trusting, it would have been like repulsing a child in trouble to have sent them away without help.

When we pulled out of South Head, we left behind as much of our murine and soap as we could spare—cutting our own margin a bit close at that—and instructed the older women repeatedly in their use. It was the best we could do.

Once more we started from South Head for Dezhneva on the eighth of July, in a heavy mist and fog. The wind was from the South, and we

The belles of South Head, with President Rutherford

had to feel our way with the utmost caution on account of the ice, which the fog made much more dangerous.

Arriving off Dezhneva, we found it impossible, because of ice and unusually heavy swells, to land Mr. Karieff, whom we had brought with us from South Head. This was awkward for him, since he had important business in Dezhneva. We compromised by taking him around to Whalen, which was comparatively free of ice, and setting him ashore there, to make the trip overland.

At Whalen our old friend Gasdaroff came aboard, and we made a mutually profitable trade with him for some fine skins, furs and whale-bone. It took us the entire day crossing and recrossing the ice from the schooner, landing the goods for Gasdaroff, and loading the barter we received in return. Still it was a good day's work, and we were weary but satisfied at the end of it.

About midnight the wind shifted, fortunately, to the southwest, and we took advantage of this to make another try at getting through the ice off Cape Serd.

Our old U.S.A. footwear was now finally discarded by all on board the *Iskum*, and we adopted the warmer and more comfortable native socks

of reindeer, worn pulled up over the trousers, skin side out. The hair, which was next to the feet, felt very soft and warm; and over these socks we wore muckluks made of sealskin (the hair seal), the feet being of hard seal, and the legs of the seal's belly. The muckluks were then lashed securely about the wearer's ankles and legs below the knee with strings cut from reindeer hide. We found them rather slippery walking until we became used to them, after which we would not have traded them for all the stiff leather boots in the stores at Tacoma. As a matter of fact, there are two types of these muckluks; the winter ones, made of the hair seal (usually with the hair side out); and the summer kind which I have just described. The latter are tanned by the native method which renders them waterproof yet pliable, except when they are allowed to dry in a hot sun.

We also wore sealskin trousers with the hair on the inside, next to our bodies, and held up with a belt of walrus or seal hide. Above these we wore the regular fur parka of the natives, which was made of reindeer skin with the hair inside. In fact, we followed the natives in almost every detail. The parka was lashed securely with a belt

and acted as a kind of shirt in which we carried everything that might be useful to us on such a journey. Whenever anyone of the party wished to get at an article he carried in his parka, he simply brought it up through the opening in the neck. In extremely cold weather, we wore a second parka over the first, with the hair outside and the flesh side turned in to meet that of the inner garment. This second parka had a capote, or hood, which came over the head and locked around the neck. It closed about the entire face, excepting a small space left for the nose, eyes and mouth. This precaution was essential, as sometimes it was so cold that a person's breath was taken away the moment he opened his mouth.

It was usually best to keep one's fingers inside the clothes next to the body. Personally, I was never able to make my Arctic mittens or fur gauntlets work very well. My hands always seemed to get cold unless I snuggled them in under my parka.

Among the furs we received in trade from Gasdaroff were eight fine polar bear skins; and before leaving Whalen I had a chance to pick up two more, as well as one very good wolf pelt from a trapper, paying for them in cash. I mention

this, as actual money seldom figures in the North. So our trip back to Whalen, though annoying because it spelled delay all along the route ahead, had not been wholly a loss.

Twelve hours after leaving Whalen, we found the ice conditions so bad we were once more forced to turn east. But by five that afternoon we determined to try running northwest by north, to make another desperate attempt to edge around the ice.

This new course promised more hopeful, and by midnight we found ourselves actually sixty miles north of Cape Serd, with what looked like fair prospects of rounding the floe after all, and being able to return to our westerly course. The weather was intensely cold, with a fine snow now blowing, which continued all night.

Early the following morning we were greatly cheered by finding ourselves really about to round what seemed the last of the ice promontories in sight. Everyone drew long breaths of relief, and prepared to relax after the strain; but, alas, for such over-hopefulness! The schooner had not cleared the ice barrier before us when we could see that farther ahead lay still another floe, with a long, projecting point that commanded a detour

Some of the native Chug-chee maidens at Whalen, Siberian Arctic

as plainly as ever did any "road closed" sign on the state highways of civilization.

This icy point seemed to run to the west as far as we could see, in the direction of Herald Island, and there was nothing to do but to feel our way along its outer edge, hoping for a lead. Following it, we discovered that it swung in on a gradual curve toward the Eastern end of Wrangell Island.

As we sailed closer to the great ice peninsula or cape, which again blocked our course, we found to our surprise that it was covered with many hundreds of sleeping walrus. They were collected in groups of varying sizes, known to traders and hunters as harems, and composed each of a big bull walrus and his numerous wives.

These bulls appeared to be the only members of the colony at all apprehensive of danger. The females were lying peacefully on the ice, either actually asleep, or lazily pretending to be, but the patriarch of each group rose sternly alert in the center of his charges. He kept raising and craning his rubberlike neck anxiously in all directions, with a restless yet monotonous movement that seemed never to tire. The sight presented by several hundred bulls all over the ice field steadily swaying their heads and necks

almost in unison, above the sleeping females, gave me the dizzy feeling of watching some gigantic piece of mechanism worked not by flesh, blood, and muscles, but by belts and dynamos.

Notwithstanding the chance we took of being caught in the pack ice if we ventured too far in, we could not resist going closer to these fascinating creatures and viewing them not only with the naked eye, but with the strongest binoculars in the schooner's equipment.

This course took us so near Cape Hawii on the southeastern end of Wrangell Island that we were able to see plainly the projecting rocks rising from the ice and snow. A little after this we struck a lead which we worked along cautiously about ten miles off the southern shore of the island, succeeding finally in crossing nearly its entire length to Cape Thomas at the southwestern end.

As we had dog teams available, I have deeply regretted that we did not then know of the presence of Stefansson's people on the Island. We could have reached the shore and rescued them by dog sled, if we had known that human beings, in such desperate need of assistance, were close to us.

The thought that we could have prevented the tragedy, and instead passed by like the Levite in

A typical Arctic walrus harem

the Bible (though, unlike the latter, we did it ignorantly), is still a painful memory to me, and doubtless to all members of the *Iskum's* crew who may have since learned of the occurrence.

There has recently been much discussion about the ownership of Wrangell Island. It may not be amiss to state a few facts here, in regard to its history. If we are to accept Stefansson's views, as expressed in his article in the *Spectator* of August 25th, 1923, he predicates the British claim to Wrangell Island upon its discovery by Captain Kellett, in 1849; and he implies that the United States claimed the Island in 1881 because England had neglected for thirty-two years to maintain her sovereign rights under Captain Kellett's discovery.

He states that America, in her turn, neglected to maintain her sovereignty for thirty-three years, so that in 1914, he was entirely justified in claiming the Island again for Great Britain; as he had in that year reaffirmed the discovery presumably made by Captain Kellett.

Stefansson would have us believe further, that the British claim was stronger than the American claim, because the British had actually occupied the Island for six months—presumably in 1849—

as compared with America's occupancy of it for twenty days in 1881.

Yet just how, when or where, under International Law or otherwise, either the United States or Great Britain can find any right or reason to claim this Island, is beyond me—though I have been a practicing lawyer for over forty years, devoting much of my time to International Law.

By every principle of right and justice, Wrangell Island is part of Arctic Siberia. It is just as much a part of the Hinterland of that region as if it were actually attached to the mainland. One wonders how Uncle Sam would feel and what he would do, if some other nation were to place men upon the Midway, or Thetis Islands, off the coast of the Alaskan Arctic shore, and thereby claim the islands as her own. Or how would it affect Great Britain if a similar location and claim should be asserted to Banksland, or some other less known Arctic Island north of the Canadian Arctic mainland shore?

It is true that most—but not all—of these islands are closer to the mainland than Wrangell to the Siberian mainland; but the principle is the same, because in each of the three cases the mother country owning the mainland has, whenever

necessary, and when the remoteness of the region would permit, exercised supervision over all such island possessions.

As a matter of fact I know, from being on the *Iskum* in such close proximity to Wrangell Island, that the Island at its southwestern end is but a hundred and nine miles due north from Cape Nord on the Siberian Arctic shore. The whole of it runs generally east and west—or, to be accurate, it is seventy miles in length bearing east northeast and west southwest. It is but thirty-five miles in width, which includes the large sand spits extending nearly ten miles from the south coast.

The appearance of the Island from the sea shows a grouping of peaks and valleys, all covered with ice and snow; the highest point being Berry Peak, which is located near the center of the Island and is about 2,500 feet high. Rodgers Harbor, a small but good harbor, is about ten miles west of Cape Hawii which is the southeastern end of the Island. Rodgers Harbor was named after the U.S.S. *Rodgers*, which was moored there during the latter part of August and the early part of September, 1881. Doubtless every student of Arctic history will recall that when the U.S.S. *Rodgers* and the U.S.S. *Corwin* were sent in search of the

unfortunate *Jeannette*, Lieutenant Hooper of the *Corwin* was the *first person actually to land on Wrangell Island.* At least, he was the first of whom we have any authentic information. The brave but unfortunate De Long and a remnant of the *Jeannette's* crew were at that time perishing in the Delta of the Lena River.

The Russian Admiral Wrangell, after whom it is named, was, so far as we know, the first white man to see Wrangell Island, having seen it, together with his exploring party, many years before—about the year 1820. All Arctic traders know that Siberian natives have been taking foxes and polar bears off Wrangell Island for time out of mind, as well as seal and walrus from the surrounding waters.

During the entire modern history of the Russian Empire, the Imperial Government was in the habit of sending one or more gun boats by way of Behring Straits to Arctic Siberia every year for the purpose of giving medical assistance and, when necessary, supplies and food to the native savages of that region. These vessels also inspected and, in many cases, ministered to the wants of the inhabitants of Russia's penal colonies located up the Arctic rivers and inland from that region.

Can it be possible, then, that all this was done without the Russians knowing anything about Wrangell Island? So far as I can discover, there is no evidence anywhere that Captain Kellett of H.M.S. *Herald* ever actually landed on Wrangell Island in 1849, or at any other time. It seems true that he landed upon Herald Island, which is an austere, inhospitable, and almost inaccessible mound of granite, 900 feet high and something over four miles long, lying a short distance easterly and somewhat north of Wrangell Island. Certainly there is more reason for saying that Captain Kellett discovered Herald Island than there is for making him the first to land on Wrangell Island.

It was back in the year 1728 that the Dane, Vitus Behring, a bold and able commander, built a little schooner, *The Gabriel*, on the shores of Kamchatka, in which he went north and discovered the straits now named after him. While it is probably true that Behring never went any great distance through the straits, he did name St. Lawrence Island in Behring Sea,—now a possession of the United States. He also came in contact with the Chug-chees, whom he described as a warlike race, fierce and unsubdued, living on the northeastern coast of Siberia.

This was nearly 200 years ago; and while Behring did not, at that time, go through the Straits, we know that Russia, even in those days, organized what was known as the "Great Northern Expedition" and placed him in command, giving him two experienced explorers, Chirikoff and Spangberg, and 570 men. We also know that in addition to this, Russia sent out various expeditions during the years which immediately followed 1728, more or less to explore the Russian Arctic shores and particularly those parts now forming the Arctic shore of Siberia.

History shows that during those years the north line of Siberia, before then shown as straight, was explored and given preliminary surveys and reconnaissances, and that Russian ships were frozen in many times on these Arctic shores, down to 1741. Their crews would spend the winter in miserable igloos, and start off again in the spring on their explorations, until finally they charted and gave the northern coast of Siberia definite shape and form, and actually included Wrangell Island.

Certainly I hold no brief for Soviet Russia in connection with this matter, because of that Government's action in seizing, the year following that of which I write, our own schooner, *Iskum*,

The closing-up of an ice lead

Arctic ice field with an open lead in background

and all our Siberian Arctic trading stations. But right is right, and justice is justice, no matter where they are found, and Wrangell Island, in my opinion, surely belongs to Russia.

Off the end of the island, we found ourselves once more completely and definitely blocked by ice. From the crow's nest, no sign of further leads or outlet to the westward, was apparent.

Snow was still blowing from the northwest, so fine at times that it had almost the opaqueness of mist, and rendered most difficult efforts of the lookout to detect possible leads. The seas, too, were running high, and we were shipping a lot of water. The schooner accordingly was put about, and not long afterward the weather began to moderate and the wind swung slowly to the westward, causing the seas to go down rapidly. By five that afternoon we had struck ice again, and with it calm weather.

The snow blew itself away, and from ten-thirty that evening until half past one the next morning, we had the most gorgeous continuous-performance of sunset and sunrise that I remember on the entire trip. There were constant rainbows, and a most brilliant sky in the north. For about an hour we sailed through a veritable pergola of rainbows—

very real ahead but invisible when looking astern. The sun never left the horizon, and flung great shafts of light on the ice, making each edge and small, sharp pinnacle, look like a luminous, faintly roseate pearl set in a bright blue shield. This strange brilliance lasted through the night until about three in the morning, when the sun was so high that its rays came too directly to sustain the illusion, and the colors faded.

CHAPTER VIII

ICE-BOUND

THE following morning it was snowing again. The snow was curiously light and dry, and fluttered down out of a perfectly unclouded sky; possibly the result of some wind over the snow-covered ice. We were now ice-bound, and unable to make any appreciable headway toward Kaluchin, our next objective.

At first the constantly recurring ice blockades had been merely rather exciting obstacles to be overcome by skillful maneuvering, but we had met so many of them, and been turned aside from our course so frequently, that they were becoming anything but an adventure. In fact, we were heartily sick of the sight of ice, no matter how dazzlingly it glittered.

By midnight, however, we had discovered some southwesterly and westerly leads in the pack, and were pushing our way through them. All hands were at a high state of tension and watchfulness

to detect signs of the ice closing in on us. Many a fine schooner has gone to Davy Jones' locker with the suddenness of a stone dropped over a cliff-side, when the lead it was exploring closed in unexpectedly, and squeezed the heavy timbers of the hull to splinters.

Those of us who slept at all that night, took brief cat naps with our clothes on, ready to leap to the pack ice overside, if the lead showed signs of narrowing dangerously. Morning found us as solidly surrounded by enormous and apparently impassable floes, as on the previous day. We had run lead after lead, only to find our way blocked before us each time, with the whole discouraging business of hunting a new path to freedom and the open seas, to be repeated over again.

Our Russian passenger, M. Astrosoff, was certainly one of the coolest men I have ever met. Seeing there was nothing he could do to help, he had considerately taken himself out of the way and retired to the hatch top, where he rolled himself in a heavy fur coat, and calmly studied an English book. There was no pretense, or attempt, to impress us with his indifference in this. He was ambitious to learn English, and quite simply took this time of inaction to work

over a list of words and common phrases I had prepared for him several days before.

Finally, the schooner being then completely stationary in the grip of the pack, and there being no lead at the moment to watch, I determined to copy his excellent example, and went down to the cabin for a book. I had been reading the *Golden Silence* in a more or less desultory fashion during the trip; but life had been so much more absorbing than the printed page, that I had not made much progress with it.

Seeing Astrosoff quietly studying in the sunlight on the hatch top, I sat myself down beside him, and read for an hour in what was literally a "golden silence"—white and golden, rather, with strange blue, cold looking shadows on the ice. It was very beautiful, and exceedingly lonely. The horizon appeared reversed. As one looked out at the encircling expanse of roughly packed ice, the schooner seemed to be bound in the bottom of a great white saucer, the edges and sides of which were ruffled in gigantic patterns with large ice caps projecting up from the pack. Some of these projections assumed shapes similar to animals, trees and great mushrooms.

The Arctic has many cross-currents which

sometimes create deceiving effects. Upon one occasion it seemed certain another schooner was meeting us. In reality it was an iceberg, sailing directly opposite our course and not over one thousand feet distant upon our starboard hand. The berg was so cut and worn by wind and water as to give, at a distance, a clear impression of a vessel.

This edge of the saucer, as we looked out and up to it, was our only horizon, unless we climbed to the crow's nest; and from there we only saw the same saucer, several times enlarged. If one allowed the imagination free rein, the silence and whiteness and desolation of that bowl of which we were the center (and the only living inhabitants, as far as we could see), might easily have become terrible; haunted by all the poor ghosts of lost ships and their crews which had preceded us to that dreary waste—and never returned, but such thoughts led to reflections that could do nothing but unfit us for our work. Astrosoff's way was by far the better; to sit in the warm Arctic sunshine on the hatch top, and lose one's self and one's worries in the thoughts of other men set down in printer's ink.

The only living things besides ourselves that we had seen since leaving Wrangell Island and the

walrus colony behind us, were two birds: an Arctic gull and a gull killer. These two hardy fliers, however, put on a most diverting show for our benefit, injecting a grateful note of comedy into what threatened to resolve itself for us into a drama of the grimmest type.

The gull had evidently caught a supply of fish, and *cached* it in the ice not two hundred yards from the schooner. Evidently he did not propose to divide it with any feathered cousin who had not worked with equally industrious forehandedness for his winter's food. But the killer had Bolshevistic ideas on the subject. It was infinitely easier as well as more entertaining to snatch from the one who had amassed the property, than to go to work on his own account.

He cannily hovered aloft, one bright black button of an eye cocked iceward as he watched Mr. Hard-working Gull swoop down to begin his breakfast. The store of little fish was apparently in an ice crevice which, for some reason, the killer himself did not or could not reach into and rob openly. But the moment the rightful owner helped himself to the first dainty morsel—presto! The killer dropped from his point of observation with all the savage rapacity of a hawk pouncing

on a chicken run. Whereupon the gull, fish held firmly in his beak, would take to the air, with the pirate hot after him, and then the chase was on—a pretty sight for us who had not, like the poor harassed victim, any stake in the outcome.

Such swift dartings, wheelings in mid-air, side slips, "falling leaf," and loop-the-loops—they did every stunt known to the most reckless airman, and then some! But in spite of the right being on the gull's side, and for all the game fight he put up, it always ended in the same way. The killer was quicker, and more rapid in the air than his adversary and the latter finally grew afraid of the sharp, spiked beak darting so dangerously near. He dropped his fish, whereupon the killer invariably swerved promptly and dove, sometimes catching it above the ice.

Time after time this tragi-comedy was re-enacted for our entertainment, and in every instance the gull lost his precious morsel to the feathered pirate. At length, as if thoroughly disgusted with the whole proceeding, the gull shook his slim wings with a sort of impatient, take-it-all-if-you-want-it air, and sailed away over the rim of our white bowl. Meanwhile, the killer—now comfortably fed and triumphant—departed about some other pressing

business in the opposite direction, with a beautiful, arrow-like flight that we could not help admiring, however much we might have disapproved of his manners and morals.

Looking over my diary of that part of the trip, I see that on July fifteenth we were still fast in the pack, with the thermometer at twenty-above, and the atmosphere very hazy. There was a mixture of mist and fine damp snow blowing out of the north.

Kolingo, the Chug-chee half-breed interpreter whom we had acquired back at our Indian Point Station, had been mightily taken with a pair of overalls he had seen among some of the trade goods in the cabin, and begged eloquently to be allowed to wear them—over his furs, of course! They must have been intended for a giant, for Kolingo was not a small man, and in his heavy fur parka presented a rather bulky appearance. Yet the overalls were much too large for him. Seeing his childlike disappointment, Madame Astrosoff came to the rescue, unpacked a new sewing machine which was the pride of her heart, and which she was taking (in swaddling clothes of fur and canvas wrappings), back to her old home in Kolyma.

The machine was set up in state on the cabin table, and reefs were taken in the legs and arms of the overalls, so that Kolingo could remain in his new garment. It was a sight almost as amusing as our gull-and-killer act, to see Madame Astrosoff, a rather large, fair woman, with a sweetly placid face, bent intently over the machine, while beside her the swarthy, moon-faced Kolingo stood wrapt in wonder and a kind of breathless expectancy. He watched each shirring revolution of the wheel as if he were witnessing an exhibition of the most amazing magic—as no doubt he believed he was.

This was the third day of our being ice-bound, and I noticed a tendency on the part of everyone to fall into gloomy silence and stare dully out across the monotonous whiteness that was shutting us away from the rest of the world. In a storm, no matter how great the danger, there is always something to be done; hands and brains are occupied to the exclusion of fears and forebodings. But in our case there was nothing we could do except wait for the wind to shift and stop our Northern drift; or for the ice to break and open leads through which we might escape. At such a time it is hard for even the most naturally optimistic to avoid the strain.

We tried all the limited opportunities for exercise at our command. Mr. Astrosoff insisted on helping Kolingo wash the forecastle, which kept them busy a whole morning. The mate and the navigating officer, Mr. Putta, went out on the ice looking for flat places from which they might collect pure snow to melt for drinking and washing purposes. The water obtained in this way was soft, and had a sweet taste that was very agreeable. That in our tanks became stale and "woody" if kept too long. Whenever we were in or near pack ice, we tried to find fresh patches of snow which could be utilized for these purposes.

In this way we got through the third and fourth days of our imprisonment. By the fifth, however, we were all beginning to feel pretty blue, and there was still no sign of a lead opening in the pack about us, or of the wind's changing. Besides being our fifth day in the ice field, it was our eighteenth in the Arctic, and in that time we had enjoyed only two sunshiny days—enough to make us depressed even without the very real anxiety hanging over the schooner.

About the middle of that afternoon, a lookout on the crow's nest made out, far in the distance, two figures toiling over the rough ice. They had

no dogs, but were making their way to us with the help of pick-poles. As they drew near enough to see plainly with the glasses, we discovered they were Chug-chees, and that the taller, and evidently the elder of the two, seemed near the point of exhaustion. His companion was giving him what help he could, but they were both stumbling panting, and about "all in" by the time we helped them over the *Iskum's* rail.

They each had skin knapsacks strapped over their shoulders, and carried, besides their poles, a 30-30 rifle. They wore, in spite of the intense cold, only their parkas, seal trousers, and muckluks. Their weather-beaten faces looked hard, and shone like dull copper, with long blue lines of tattooing down both cheeks. An artist might have considered them merely picturesque figures, but we were so glad to see them, and to have a chance of sending a message by them to the outside world, that they appeared to us like angels in a rugged and weather worn disguise.

Our first act, of course, was to fill them with food and hot coffee, which revived them to the point of conversation. With Kolingo and Astrosoff as interpreters, we learned that our visitors had toiled across many miles of rough ice in their efforts

to reach us. The Chug-chees had been on a seal-hunt when they made out our masts far in the distance, and came all the way to investigate and offer help if it should be needed. They agreed to take a note to Carl Johnson, our trader at Kaluchin, telling him of our position and danger. So after being well fed, warmed and presented with small articles from our stores that took their fancy, they departed for Kaluchin over the boundless sea of ice—a long and difficult journey which we feared they could never make without re-laying to other hunters.

They are a wonderful people, the Chug-chees, and many more highly civilized folk must take their hats off to them, especially when it comes to the question of risking their lives, their goods, and enduring all sorts of dangers and discomforts to help a neighbor in trouble.

The entire crew and passengers of the schooner stood grouped on the deck, watching the two bulky but active figures jumping the irregular ledges and small crevasses, and climbing bravely over icy pinnacles until they were lost to view over the rim of the great Ice Saucer.

CHAPTER IX

DRIFTING WITH THE PACK

WE did not go to our bunks that night but took turns alternately watching and sleeping on deck. The watcher stood over the sleeper to warn him or throw him over on the ice and then jump overside himself if the schooner began to break up, for the ice had suddenly begun to move with a mighty cracking and grinding. At times it sounded like artillery fire all about us, causing the vessel to rise and fall by the head and then astern, also to tip heavily on one side and then the other. For some reason she never broke. The wind had increased, and, fortunately, was carrying us coastward with the moving ice. Such were the conditions until the southerly drift brought us off the rocky buttes forming Cape Serd. I am sure few of us ever expected to see another morning, yet, when it came it was a day of sunshine, with crisp blue skies overhead. The whole world—sky, sea and rocky snow-clad buttes

Danger of being crushed against rocky shore, toward the close of our 12 days' imprisonment

of the nearby land—joined to form a cold, clean-cut brilliance of blue, gold, and white that raised our depressed and drooping spirits wonderfully.

Of course we were still fast in the pack's grip, but in that new golden morning light, and feeling the ice moving at last—which meant that leads were bound to open before long—nobody could possibly have continued to feel blue.

With the moving field, our saucer had disappeared and the horizon became normal.

Between us and the distant horizon line we could make out two other ships, ice-bound like ourselves. We knew them for the *Blue Sea* and the *Eagle*, American schooners making their way north for the same reason we were: to barter with the natives along and among the Islands of the Siberian Arctic coast, and, above all, to reach the fur mecca known as "Kolyma."

The drift had brought us within about ten miles of them, and perhaps that fact also helped to give us a pleasant, companionable feeling. We were not alone any longer in a desolate white bowl of a world, whose edges were raised into jagged ice projections shutting off all familiar or living things.

The sun was quite strong and warm, so that

everyone was on deck, basking happily in its long-withheld comfort. Coats were necessary, of course, but cumbersome fur garments could be dispensed with—which was a decided relief.

It was well we had those few gay hours of sunshine and hope to cheer us, for the next day was gray again; no sun, and a fine drizzle of rain and mist that penetrated clothing and spirits alike, with an all-pervasive dampness. Everyone, in consequence, was rather depressed once more, though each tried hard not to show it for the sake of the rest.

It was the seventh day of our ice-imprisonment, and we had begun to ask ourselves how long it was likely to continue. That morning, a small native skin boat containing a Chug-chee and two boys, worked its way to us through narrow breaks, and by carrying their kayak, from the tiny igloo village on the east side of Cape Serd. The man was a pitiful object, for both feet had been recently frozen, which had apparently necessitated a crude amputation. There was nothing, of course, that we could do for him. Unfortunately, he had heard marvelous tales of our healing at Whalen, and came to us with pathetic faith that we could work a miracle in his behalf.

This shows *Iskum* about to be abandoned as a total loss soon after last picture. A change of wind saved us

However, we did the next best thing. We fed him and his two small sons, and gave them all presents from our store of trade goods. They went away at last, not too unhappy.

The *Blue Sea* and *Eagle* were still ice-bound off the Cape, which cheered us a bit on two counts: we were still in company with our own kind; and neither ship was gaining on us in the race for the furs, ivory and whalebone to the westward.

Gallantly the *Iskum* hammered away at the ice all that night without making a single yard of headway. Toward morning we were forced to desist from this useless battering for fear of disabling her engine, rudder, or propeller. Soon after midnight the drizzle of rain turned to hail, and the thermometer dropped to below freezing. (On our rare days of sunshine the mercury occasionally went as high as forty, around noon.)

The increased cold was another blow to our fast disappearing hopes. With everything freezing solidly over again, there was less chance than ever of leads opening.

I turned in that night with the heaviest heart I had known since we left Tacoma. We were not only far behind in our schedule of stations to be visited (which meant that in order to be out of the

Arctic before the winter night and ice closed in, we must skip some of our calls at the least important points), but at the rate of progress we were making, there was no certainty that we could stop anywhere, on schedule or off. Furthermore, there was no way of knowing when we would get out of the Arctic.

It seems we hit a hard old ice season. The natives asserted it had been the worst in many years, keeping the seal and walrus far away, while the alternately moving or stationary and broken icefields had increased the difficulties and dangers of hunting polar bear.

Busy with these unprofitable and not unnatural reflections, it was quite a while before I dropped off to sleep. When I did, I tossed on a kaleidoscope of the most catastrophic nightmares a man ever rode. It was from the most vivid and depressing of these that I awoke suddenly with the feeling that someone was looking at me.

A cheering sunbeam was poking its finger in at my porthole, which was vaguely soothing before I quite took in its presence there; but what occupied my entire, half-awakened attention at the moment, was the sight of two round, brown faces, big as full moons, with amiable grins (if one can picture a

full moon so), flashing double rows of strong white teeth at me not two feet away from where my startled eyes stared back at them from the pillow.

One of the moons grunted, ingratiatingly, and widened the grin, whereupon I grinned back, recognizing the Chug-chee nationality of my unexpected visitors, though not any individual acquaintanceship.

Of course they wanted to trade, and having worked out to the schooner carrying their skin kayak, had been permitted to come aboard. Soon they had wandered off on a privately conducted tour of inspection that ended up in my cabin. I suppose the rest of the *Iskum's* company who were about at that early hour, were too busy to keep an eye on them, and these natives, being naturally as curious as children, had undertaken their own entertainment.

They muttered, grinning, the native word "tàlk" we had come to interpret for "tobacco," at which I nodded agreement, and prepared to rise. "Tàlk" —the spelling is my own and phonetic—is any tobacco; "Ramow—tàlk" is smoking tobacco, while "Ra–lup–tàlk" is chewing tobacco. They politely withdrew a few paces to give me room,

but not far enough to prevent their keeping a watchful eye on me until the tobacco should be forthcoming.

I found that we had drifted with the ice opposite their village, Natan, near Cape Serd; and that they had been the first to board us. They were soon followed, however, by their kinsmen, who hurried out to offer fox skins and whalebone. Tobacco was their principal requirement, but they also asked for sugar and some of their favorite enamel-ware cups. The women wanted beads, as usual.

The bigger and more moon-faced of the two who had awakened me, had a name that sounded like "Charley," so I rechristened him "Natan Charley." He seemed actually to sense something humorous about it, for his grin widened each time I addressed him by it, until I began to have serious fears that his cheeks would split literally from ear to ear.

He was as shrewd a trader as I ever met, and did his best, with a most innocent air, to get a double supply of goods for each fox skin. He had several really fine specimens of white fox—full, long-haired prime winter pelts—but he had also mighty inflated ideas of their exchange value. However, after a good deal of sign language had been called into play, we came to a mutually

satisfactory understanding, and a bargain was finally struck.

By afternoon, after much hauling and tugging at ropes made fast to the ice, we managed to warp the schooner into open water, and ran in closer to the mainland, in order to facilitate trading with the Natan settlement. Late as it was, the rest of the inhabitants of the village swarmed out to board us. They crowded the deck space, getting eternally under everyone's feet, all jabbering excitedly, or falling back on the sign language when interpreters were not at hand.

The arrival of a trader here, as at Whalen, meant an annual holiday celebration. We had to set out a feast of reindeer soup, tea and hardtack on the hatch cover.

They had tied their kayaks astern of the schooner in a long procession, like the tail of a kite, and we must have looked ridiculous enough from the nearby ice. I was sorry the light was not sufficiently strong to have snapped the scene with my camera.

Early the following morning (we had none of us slept much, being unable to get rid of our too-persistent visitors), we found to our delight that several wide leads had opened in the ice overnight.

This time we made no polite gestures but bundled our guests over the rail into their kayaks, firmly and hurriedly, with the usual command "*Ta-ham*" —Chug-chee for "Go home." Then we started, with hope renewed for the hundredth time, down one of those trickily promising lanes to freedom and open water.

This one let us through for quite a gain, then closed in ahead, blocking the way abruptly as if suddenly tired of playing with us, and left us once more ice-bound; this time not quite twenty miles from Kaluchin Bay. Our station at Kolyma appeared to be fully as elusive a spot as the North Pole had once been. I commenced to wonder why the Company had ever imagined it could conduct a post at such an unreachable place.

We seemed to have been traveling toward Kolyma since the beginning of time, without ever coming within eyeshot of it. Perhaps after all, there was no such place. I was ready to believe anything of it, at that moment; even to disbelieve in it altogether.

CHAPTER X

FIGHTING ICE

DESPERATELY we resolved to abandon the lead-running, and attempt a long detour out into the Arctic to the North, hoping to circle the ice field and so eventually resume our westerly course.

Accordingly, we made what proved a profitless detour to the northward, driving the little *Iskum* ever farther into the unknown seas at the top of the world. Several times we saw great migrating flocks of birds flying north, over the schooner, and speculated considerably on the possible presence of land ahead—or at least of some of the high, rocky buttes which are inaccessible to humans, but are used by birds as safe nesting places. We had hoped, as I have explained, by some lucky chance to swing around the pack and reach Kolyma. But having made our way beyond the 74th parallel, and still finding ice in every direction except to the southeast and south, we finally gave it up, and

turned back to Cape Serd. Our observations led us to the discouraging conclusion that the ice pack we had encountered at our farthest north was probably the permanent Polar field. We evidently had penetrated unexplored area at least to some extent.

The weather being clear, we were able, from the crow's nest, to see a considerable distance, and that great, endless field of ice, with the sun shining on it, was a glorious sight. The edges off on the horizon toward the Pole and to the northeast were much broken and piled up, some of them towering in high, sharp masses that resembled small snow-covered mountains.

Toward the west, this mountainous effect was not so pronounced. The piled ice there seemed lower, and kept decreasing in height as far as we could see to the westward, until at a point about northwest by west, and from there to the southwest, it gradually drifted down to an almost flat and unbroken snow-covered field.

We promptly took advantage of this flat, clean ice, which was entirely free from walrus wallows, and filled our dory with the light snow that lay on top of it. This provided us with an ample supply of fresh drinking water for some days to come.

Bucking and riding ice

On the return trip to Cape Serd, we had either wide leads or the open sea itself, which enabled us to relax somewhat from the prolonged strain—a most grateful change for all hands.

Reaching Cape Serd, we learned from some of the natives that the schooners *Blue Sea* and *Eagle* were still ice-bound in the vicinity of Kaluchin. Rather than run into a similar predicament once more, now that we were safely out of it at last, we determined to give up any further attempts in the way of far-out ocean travel, and instead to work our way along the leads between the ice and the shore.

This, though a fairly dangerous proceeding, was the only alternative left if we were to reach our stations and traders at Kaluchin, Chaun Bay, and Kolyma; as well as the many intermediate points where, the season before, we had established trade relations with the natives. There were also small traders inland—mostly Chug-chees and Deermen (for we were out of the Eskimos' country since leaving East Cape), who gathered trade by dog sled and reindeer over a wider area than we could have reached from the schooner. This they brought once a year to one of our stations—usually Kaluchin or Kolyma—to be ready for our coming.

These posts must all be visited, reconditioned and reorganized if we were to realize the profits on our carefully built-up organization.

We made our way slowly, in what little clear water we could find in occasional leads; and then, when these failed us, by sending the schooner full speed against the narrowest portion of the ice barrier. Repeatedly we ran lines astern to heavy ice pinnacles and with the combined use of engine, winch, and man-power, pulled ourselves off the ice we had climbed upon, and back into open water—only to send the long-suffering little ship full speed again against the blockading ice.

It was slow progress, and hard on the schooner, but we did make headway in the direction we wished to go. Our travel in the leads we thus reached was constantly interspersed by dodging large ice floes near shore, where the open water widened, or charging recklessly into and over smaller ones when there was no room for maneuvering.

The water must be sounded continuously, yet even by throwing the lead every few minutes, we were so close to shore that the shallowness not infrequently put us on sand bars, in spite of all we could do. Indeed we were aground on bars no less

A large floating iceberg

than five times in getting to Kaluchin, though fortunately, we were able, on each occasion, to back off by reversing our engine. There had apparently never been any accurate charting of that coast, the only charts available being most unreliable.

This method of navigation became so uncertain and perilous, that we finally kept two men out ahead of us in the dory, throwing the lead and prodding about with a long pole to make sure we did not strike submerged rocks or further bars.

It should be remembered that the principal requisite in navigating Arctic waters is to make as much haste as possible. If you are lucky enough to strike water a mile or more long and much wider than the schooner, you can make up some lost time, and you are not under quite such desperate tension of watchfulness; but when the lead is very narrow, you do not know at what moment the ice will close up ahead, or about the schooner—either crushing her outright or imprisoning her for another long and helpless wait. In the latter case, there is still the always-present chance of the ice far out at sea piling in on the shore ice which has bound your ship, and then—well, that is something navigators in the Arctic do not like to think about.

When such a trap is sprung, the stoutest schooner can be splintered to match-wood in less time than it takes to describe.

It was drawing near the last of July. The Captain and Astrosoff (who insisted upon doing his full share as a member of the crew) had just returned from their turn at dory duty, when the wind shifted with great suddenness even for those latitudes, and we found ourselves beset by heavy weather from the south. The lead we were then running had a southwesterly course which led us almost into the teeth of the storm, and it was with the utmost difficulty that the schooner was able to make headway at all against both wind and ice.

When morning broke, we beheld the *Blue Sea* and *Eagle* still ice-bound, not more than five or six miles away. We had entered Kaluchin Bay and were at the time not such a great distance south-east of our Kaluchin Station. But though we kept on persistently bucking the ice all day, at mid-night we knew it for a losing fight, and gave up the useless battering. We were entirely hemmed in on all sides, like our sister ships across the pack.

A small floater. The almost perfect reflection shows the wonderful clearness of the Arctic water

CHAPTER XI

FIRST SIBERIAN ARCTIC WHITE CHILD

FORTUNATELY, when the ice closed in on us for this second imprisonment, we were not far off the southeastern end of Kaluchin Island, and I decided to make the attempt to walk across the intervening ice and thence with Kolingo's aid, to work my way along the shore to our station at the northern end of Kaluchin Bay.

Having had a hard day fighting ice, and, intending to start for shore very early in the morning, I turned in that night with my clothes on. As a matter of fact, we more often slept that way than any other on the trip, but occasionally when the weather was fairly promising, and seemed to threaten no midnight alarms, we did dispense with a few of the bulkier outer garments when crawling into our bunks. It certainly made for a more comfortable night's sleep.

It is curious, as a study of the instinctive adaptability of human nature, what hardships

(from a home standpoint), strange new customs and entire lack of familiar comforts one will learn to accept as the most ordinary, everyday matter of routine. Way down in Tacoma, I am perfectly sure that if I had been required to sleep in my clothes and overcoat—even in a soft, box-springed bed, steady on terra firma—well, I could not have slept, that is all; and what is more, I should only too probably have felt grumpy and abused all the next day.

However, on an Arctic schooner one does that very thing almost nightly, and sleeps peacefully, in a narrow, exceedingly hard wooden bunk with snores resounding from other nearby bunks. And one awakes in the morning feeling like a boy off on his first independent holiday.

I was fortunate in having Kolingo, the half-breed Chug-chee, to act as guide on the trip to the Kaluchin Station. He was thoroughly familiar with that entire region, having come from our Sanivina Station across the Chukotsk Peninsula and down Kaluchin Bay with a dog-team during the winter of '21–'22.

Finding when we awoke, that we were still firmly ice-bound, we made preparations for the start. We armed ourselves with revolvers and

pickeroons, and set out on foot, about six o'clock. John Harmon, the engineer, Alec and Astrosoff went with us across the ice to drag the dory we should need in crossing the narrow strip of open water between the edge of the pack and the nearby shore of the Bay.

The mate, Mr. Putta, who had also accompanied us as far as the shore, was very anxious to continue on to the station. Feeling the schooner was safe enough where she was for the present, I allowed him to do so—a decision which afterward proved a most fortunate one for both Kolingo and me.

Kolingo, by signs and some talk, had made us understand that the station was no more than five miles off to the westward. But by seven that evening we found that his five miles had grown to fifteen. And such miles! They must have been double, or even treble, any ordinary fifteen miles of going.

We went through lagoons, through swamps, tundra, and sand. It was by far the most exhausting tramp I have ever attempted; yet for all our fatigue, and the discomfort of thoroughly wet clothing, we found much to interest us on the way.

The mate, W. W. Putta—who was also Navigating Officer—proved himself to be more than a

wonderful sailor on this trip. He was a regular giant in strength, and his good nature was as great as his powers of endurance. He happened to be the only one of the party wearing high rubber boots, and he actually picked Kolingo up and carried him across the worst lagoons, on his shoulders.

While I was able to walk through the shallow lagoons and streams, I could not, with muckluks, wade the really deep places, so after the mate had carried Kolingo over, he patiently and cheerfully returned, and carried me. I am not a light load by any means, but the man only grunted a bit as he swung me up to his shoulder, much as if I had been a trunk and he an extra-burly expressman.

Of course, after plunging through the water, back and forth several times, he was thoroughly wet, as it came in places well above even his hip boots. By the time we had covered about three-quarters of the distance to the station, I decided that something must be done.

Accordingly, the three of us sat down. Kolingo and I removed our muckluks and the deer socks underneath, letting our legs and feet dry in the clear, cold air. We pulled off the mate's rubber boots and I put my fairly dry socks on him,

without the soaked rubber boots over them. Kolingo's socks and muckluks were still almost dry—thanks to Mr. Putta's strong arms—and I donned my muckluks minus the socks. In this way we were able to rid ourselves of the dragging discomfort of wet footgear which, in that biting wind, was not only unpleasant but conducive to serious after-effects in the way of colds.

The last five miles to the station were dryer going, but were rockier than ever. The mate felt the change more than Kolingo and I, for the deer socks were no adequate substitute for his stout hip boots. We were all a bit lame, and stumbling from fatigue and bruises, when we finally toiled within sight of the station, after over ten strenuous hours of steady walking.

Carl Johnson, our trader at Kaluchin, had, the year previously, married a Russian girl whom he had rescued in quite a romantic—not to say melodramatic—manner from the Bolshevists. She was a young woman belonging to a family of culture and breeding in Petrograd and had, in one week of massacre and horror, lost mother, father and two brothers, as well as a quite considerable inheritance. Threatened by starvation, captivity, and worse, this plucky girl, brought up tenderly

and in the midst of plenty, had managed to elude her enemies and made her escape alone northward from Petrograd.

One hesitates even to imagine her physical sufferings. Her mental anguish of grief and fear can of course never be known to anyone save herself, but the privations, fatigue and hunger she endured in that long flight northward to the little Chug-chee village where Johnson found and fell in love with her, would, to my thinking, make as tremendous an epic as has ever yet been written. A story, not, alas, for my practical pen to attempt!

Johnson was aboard the *Iskum* at the time, on his way to his new post at Kaluchin. It must have been a quick wooing, for when the schooner sailed three days later, they took the girl with them; put to sea beyond the three-mile limit; hoisted the Stars and Stripes; and the Captain married Johnson to his Russian bride.

Knowing the story, we were naturally all most anxious to meet the new Mrs. Johnson. We planned to stock the station with the best we had on board in the way of food, stores, medical supplies, clothing, etc., in order to render her situation up there in that lonely and desolate

Mrs. Carl Johnson, and her "Clothesline" at Kaluchin, Siberia. The only white woman on the Siberian Arctic Coast

post as comfortable as possible to one brought up in such very different surroundings.

Upon our arrival at the station that evening, we found that a small, exceedingly red-faced and chubby son and heir to the house of Johnson had preceded us by fifteen days. Both the baby and the young mother were doing well, having been most capably taken care of by a wise old toothless Chug-chee woman who had, in her day, ushered a good many native babies into this world. As far as we could learn, little Carl junior had the honor to be the first white child born in the Siberian Arctic, but at that period of his career he knew nothing about such honors, and cared less.

He was a fine, healthy little chap, and while the old Chug-chee woman and his mother had done their best for him with what they had on hand, the latter was greatly distressed by the lack of proper clothing for her baby. She missed those small comforts and dainty accessories with which the babies of her old friends in Russia had been carefully surrounded. She seemed to think nothing at all of her own total lack of the most ordinary comforts and care, but she did want them for her little son.

She and her husband had hoped that the

schooner would take them to Chaun Bay or Kolyma, when we arrived at Kaluchin, where they could put in the winter by taking charge of one of the Company stations at those points. The natives at Kaluchin, unlike most of those along that coast, were noisy and inclined to be actually dangerous at times. They had been taught to make a very heady "home brew" the year before, probably by some Russian prisoners from the Penal Colonies or salt mines of Siberia. When under the influence of this stumulant, they reverted to a very savage and primitive state; constant brawls and debauches went on within the igloos in the neighborhood.

America or Great Britain would soon stop any debasement of these primitive people. Possibly Russia may, but it is late in coming. The Chugchees and all of the farther Western savages respect a real official, but look with contempt upon those who, posing as their superiors, are, from the standpoint of human intelligence and desire, beneath, and in some cases far beneath, the natives themselves.

Johnson, naturally, was worried over keeping his wife and baby there under such conditions, particularly as he had often to be absent from

home for days at a time, when making his rounds of the traps or to trade with igloo villages of Deermen farther inland.

The schooner being long overdue on account of our ice troubles, the Johnsons had given us up for that year, and were preparing as best they could to spend another long, hard winter where they were.

They gave us a welcome in which relief, delight, relaxation—and on the part of Mrs. Johnson a suspicion of tears not far off—were very touchingly blended. We could imagine what the past winter must have been like from the earnestness of their greeting. We recalled our sensations when the schooner was fast in the ice pack for so long and there seemed a most uncomfortably strong chance in favor of her remaining there indefinitely. Indeed, we experienced a warm fellow feeling of understanding for our Russian hostess, who had been through so much so bravely. I have said that the Far North makes a strong man, and breaks a weakling. That applies, evidently, to women as well. Mrs. Johnson was no weakling.

CHAPTER XII

EAT 'EM RAW—AND WALRUS

THAT night we remained at the station with the Johnsons, as Carl and I had planned to begin our check-up of the goods and barter on hand early the following morning. This had to be done as expeditiously as possible, so that all would be in readiness for our departure as soon as the schooner succeeded in jarring loose from the ice and working her way through leads to the north end of Kaluchin Bay.

Accordingly the whole household rose betimes: the mate returning across the ice to the schooner, and Johnson and I beginning our work the minute breakfast was out of the way.

By the middle of the morning the news of our arrival had spread through all the nearby Chugchee villages, by some mysterious means such news has of traveling up there, and the station was promptly besieged by crowds of natives. They

not only came to call; they settled down for a friendly all-day visit, prepared to drink tea ceremoniously with us, hear any news of the outside world we cared to tell, and make a profitable deal or two in the way of barter.

We were far too busy to stop and pay much attention to their wants, but they accepted that placidly. Some sat down in rows to watch our activities, while others roamed about the station like curious children, getting in our and each other's way and generally managing to be under foot most of the day.

At Kaluchin Bay, and from then until you reach Kolyma, the natives are eaters of raw food—principally fish and seal. My first example of these raw-meat eaters was a little Chug-chee girl of not more than eight or nine.

Johnson had told me that there was a native family near the station which was having a very hard time to live. The father had been formerly in the Company's employ, but of late had been unsuccessful in his efforts to hunt and fish; and there were a wife and little girl to be provided for during the coming winter.

Naturally I was interested to see what could be done for them, particularly as Johnson spoke

highly of the father as a native of more than average intelligence and ability. So after the noon meal, we walked over to the latter's igloo.

The father had just arrived from a fishing expedition, and this time he had been successful to the extent of three fair-sized fish. The little girl sidled shyly out to stand in the doorway of the igloo and eye the white visitor, Johnson (whom of course she knew by sight) had brought to see them. Then her father and the fish appeared, and immediately I could see that all interest in me had ceased to exist.

The mother kept back in the dimness of the igloo's interior, and if she also were hungry she was too proud to show it. The child, however, had no such inhibitions. Her eager black eyes fastened themselves on the round, oily fish in her father's hand. (Arctic fish are fatter and oilier in appearance than the ordinary kind. Even their scales seem more like decorations on the smooth, shiny skin, than real scales.)

The child took a slow step nearer. The father, still talking to Johnson, flung the three fish on the snow beside him.

Pretending not to watch her, I saw the youngster steal an anxious glance at us, and a starved,

desperate one at those repulsive looking specimens of Arctic fishdom. Then, like a softly moving little shadow she slipped around back of her father, stooped and caught up the two smallest fish in a single, fierce movement. One she threw behind her into the igloo, toward the corner where her mother stood, but she began a businesslike attack upon the second, grasping the head and tail in either hand, much as one would eat an ear of corn, and setting her strong young teeth into the oily, raw substance that served for skin and scales.

Apparently it was a perfectly satisfactory substitute for shad, smelt or salmon farther South, for I watched her eat the entire fish ravenously, only pausing once to run her forefinger through its insides, in a very rudimentary cleaning process. Later, when we all went into the igloo we saw the mother eating the other fish—quite raw, and with the same relish her small daughter had manifested over her own meal.

In addition to the skins Johnson had collected at the station, we had shot seals from the schooner, while working the leads to Kaluchin.

Some of these were the hair seal, but we also took a good many ugruk (sometimes called cow seal). Occasionally we shot them asleep on the

ice, but more often as they swam ahead of us in the open leads. The ugruk seals vary more in coloring than the smaller varieties. Most of them are a dark gray, that grows still deeper in tone when the skin is dried. But once in a while you find a skin spotted as beautifully as a leopard. We also shot specimens of what is called a drab, or silver seal, which has undulations of the leopard marking. There is quite a common variety of ugruk, known as the saddle seal, with stripes swinging about the back and middle of the body somewhat in the shape of a saddle, and in really exquisite shades of silver-gray. These—the leopard, silver, and saddle seals—are, of course, much more valuable than the ordinary species.

The baby seals were particularly amusing creatures, full of the most inordinate curiosity regarding the schooner and ourselves. They would stick their heads out of the water quite near us, study us solemnly with their funny little near-human faces (so ludicrously like our old circus friend, "Jo-Jo," the dog-faced boy), then dive in a sudden flurry of panic, and pop up nearer still, to repeat the survey again and again until they had finally decided we were not worth so much trouble. Then they would swim off about their own affairs.

Natives who have just cut the tusks and part of skull from a walrus, the body having just dropped alongside the boat. See tusks projecting from native's knee

I made myself rather unpopular by not allowing any shooting of seal or walrus which we could not take on board—not being a believer in hunting for the mere sake of killing.

Later I learned the wisdom of this rule, as the natives in that part of the world are exceedingly hostile to anyone who does not take their kill. In other words, the seal and walrus are their sole guarantee against starvation, and they refuse to see anyone wantonly waste what is so vital to their life and prosperity.

The natives themselves will not kill except for trade, or their own needs. In fact, when occasionally a big herd of walrus is washed up on the beach with shore ice, and stranded there, the Chugchees and the Chuvanes, or Yukaghires, as the case may be, will raise a tremendous excitement, calling the whole tribe together for the purpose of helping the animals back into the water.

From what I could make out in our rather limited conversation (by means of broken English, the few Chug-chee words I came to recognize, and an abundance of sign talk), I am convinced the natives are superstitious about harm to these animals reacting upon their own welfare. I have heard of cases where, in years when the seal is not

plentiful, they will attribute the scarcity to the existence of an evil spirit inhabiting the body of some member of the tribe who may be afflicted either mentally, or with an unusual bodily ailment. They believe that the seal will not come near that particular coast, as long as the suspected native is there. Acting upon which conviction, they promptly put the poor victim to death by setting one temple against a rock or cake of ice, and hitting his other temple with a bone club. Death is said to result almost painlessly, and instantaneously. Nevertheless, the idea is distinctly unpleasant to contemplate.

I instance here another custom of an otherwise kindly and generous people. Old people, who have become helpless, are put to death in the same manner when they are no longer able to live with comfort. Probably this is a measure of stern necessity in a land where the struggle for existence is perpetual and cruel under the most favorable conditions. But again, it is a necessity before which our more southern civilization shrinks in disgust and condemnation. The fact, too, that the victim's executioner must be his nearest of kin, is a part of the proceeding no less repulsive to us than the deed itself; yet, on reflection, one can see

Native walrus carving, pronounced the most interesting and beautiful of all Arctic ivory

that this originated, in reality, as a protective measure.

As often as we saw walrus, we never got over being immensely entertained and interested by them. Grunting and snorting on nearby ice, they sounded like hogs, but to attempt to describe what they looked like is a more difficult matter. Dave used to say they reminded him of Lewis Carroll's "Walrus and the Carpenter" in *Alice in Wonderland*, and we decided that the verses were no more deliciously absurd than the animals in real life. Their huge mouths, and formidable looking tusks are sufficiently daunting, but in addition they have remarkable whiskers like quills, which jut out from the jowls of the upper jaw, and through which the walrus can squirt a regular shower-bath of water quite violently over anything near him when he chooses. It is amazing the rapidity with which they climb from water to ice by using their tusks and flappers.

The walrus is an animal almost vital to the native, and we were always glad to take its hide in barter, as we could use it to trade again farther north with the Chug-chees, or Chuvanes and Yukaghires (Deermen) for fox, seal, polar bear, and reindeer skins. The natives use the walrus

hide for igloo construction, and also for making their boats. All the large whaleboats are made of it, as well as many of the umiaks and the larger kayaks in which they paddle up the shallow creeks and lagoons, or through leads in the pack ice when hunting or fishing. The smaller kayaks are also made of seal skins.

The hide is likewise prized for the making of native rope, which is exceedingly strong. The flesh of the animal is used for dog meat, and its intestines when dried and prepared by special methods, are sewn with native sinew thread into waterproof parkas by the skillful seamstresses among the women. The natives also use the bladders, inflated, to steady their small boats in a rough sea. Like a row of balloons these crude buoys are fastened to the edges of the kayaks, to be drawn inboard when the sea is smooth, and when the waves become threatening, to be flipped dextrously over with a mere turn of the fingers. Held up between the double rows of balloons, the little craft bobs gaily on its way, with no fear of anything more serious than an occasional splash of water taken over bow or sides.

The tusks of the walrus, of course, are excellent ivory, and bring good prices at home in the States.

Billikens carved by the natives; at the right molar tooth of a mastodon

The decorative type of pipe used by Chug-chee and Deermen before they were able to procure the regular white man's pipe from the traders

The natives do really interesting color work in decorating this ivory in various ways, making their paint from the roots of a small, mosslike plant that grows in the tundra, and contriving by a method white artists have not been able to imitate, to get the stain actually under the surface of the ivory itself. Even the teeth of this useful animal are employed to make carved charms and trinkets, which find a ready sale both in native and civilized markets.

In the United States, England and Germany, walrus hide is used extensively for trunks. But for the most part we re-traded our walrus hides in the Arctic for other furs, to bring home with us.

The following day we finished our work at the Kaluchin Station, finding everything in excellent shape, much to Johnson's delight. By midday the schooner had succeeded in working through ice leads around to the northern end of the bay, and arrived off the station early in the afternoon.

At various times since we had sighted the Siberian coast, the Captain had expressed a desire—which grew with every shore trip he made—for hunting and prospecting. We had found at different points, generally near the mouths of frozen and snow-covered rivers, indications of copper,

gold and iron which had fired his imagination strongly—the lure of buried treasure being almost as old as the history of mankind. So, since Johnson was as anxious to leave the Kaluchin Station as the Captain was to go ashore, an arrangement was finally made by mutual consent between the Captain and myself, whereby he was to be placed in charge of the station in Johnson's absence, to explore and prospect as much as he pleased, until the schooner's return from Kolyma later in the season.

Though Mr. Putta, the mate, had not, at the time of our engaging him, made any claims to knowledge of Arctic waters, it now developed that in reality he was far better equipped in this direction than we supposed, and was entirely competent to assume command while the Captain prospected.

Accordingly, everyone being satisfied, Mrs. Johnson, Carl and the baby were moved aboard the *Iskum*, where Dave Rutherford and I gave up our cabin to their use, and Captain Winnerlund and his dunnage were set ashore at the station.

This bark and pen rack reveal a gentle refinement in the working of walrus ivory not always found in the native products

CHAPTER XIII

LOSS OF THE "EAGLE"

AT Mrs. Johnson's request, we found room on the schooner for a little native boy named Attua, who was of either Chuvane or Yukaghire stock, and who acted as nurse to the small Carl, Jr. Attua's parents and all his near relatives had been killed in some affray after the Russian revolution, when the reindeer herds of their tribe had been driven off by Bolshevik agents. Somehow the youngster had drifted down to our Kaluchin Station, where—finding him willing and gentle—Mrs. Johnson had pressed him into service as a sort of "mother's helper."

From that time—so Johnson told me—Attua was the envy of all the Chug-chee children for miles around. The natives there had *never seen a white child before*, and they had been coming, by whole families, from long distances, ever since little Carl's birth, just to get a look at the white trader's baby. Most of them wanted to hold him,

and when this was not permitted, they would beg earnestly to be allowed just to touch him. Even this was not very practicable or pleasing to the mother, so she effected a compromise by holding up her son to be viewed by the curious from a respectful distance.

This part of her many duties she eventually delegated to Attua, who worked at it overtime, much to the delight of the natives, and the aggrandizement of Attua himself. Even the baby who might have reasonably been expected to protest at so much handling, seemed to enjoy it, and Attua was always able to quiet his crying when even his mother failed.

Naturally, Attua's nursing relieved Mrs. Johnson of a great deal of work, and she begged to be allowed to take the boy on the schooner for the trip to Chaun Bay and Kolyma. In addition to caring for the baby, he undertook to act as cabin boy and to make himself generally useful, so we added him to the crew.

Our original sailing list had grown considerably, as may be perceived, since we left Tacoma. Sam Brown and Allee had been set ashore at East Cape among their own people, Kolingo had been left at the Kaluchin Station to help Captain

"Attua," the "Nurse Boy," whom I found in a destitute condition, clothed him and made him a cabin boy. He proved most efficient

Winnerlund, but we still had the two Astrasoffs and Andria, the Communist; and now the Johnson family and Attua. However, we managed somehow and it was pleasant enough, from a social viewpoint, to have new faces around us.

The *Iskum* left the Kaluchin Station at seven in the evening. We settled our latest passengers comfortably on board, and headed for Cape Vankarem to the westward. Everyone, except those on watch, turned in early as the last few days had been fatiguing for all concerned, our nights' rest having been cut to the minimum by the necessity for haste in finishing up the business at the station and getting the schooner away on time.

I slept straight through until seven the next morning, when I found that we had passed Cape Vankarem three hours earlier, and that Acting Captain Putta had, according to orders, shaped our course for Cape Nord. Vankarem is a dangerous spot for vessels in those waters—especially at night—by reason of the many hidden rocks and large boulders off the Cape. However, we had worked our way around safely enough, though about noon of the next day we did run on a sandy shoal not marked on our charts—where we had

to spend an anxious half-hour getting the schooner afloat again by means of propeller, and the fore and stay sails. This was eventually accomplished, but we were no sooner under way on the course for Cape Nord than the ice began coming in again; great floating cakes of it, that soon collected so thickly about us they threatened another impassable blockade.

By three that afternoon it was raining, and skies and seas alike were gray and gloomy. The ice continued to grow heavier, and the spirits of all on board experienced a slump from the gaiety and bustle of our departure from Kaluchin, to a sort of wordless depression.

The Astrasoffs and I attempted a listless and perfunctory exchange of Russian-English conversation, but no one had much enthusiasm for self-improvement. We dropped it after an hour or so, and I went on deck to watch the crew fighting ice—a familiar sight now to all on board.

The schooner hammered at the ice all through that night and the following morning, making headway very slowly. By evening she had reached a point where we could proceed no farther. Accordingly, we put a line on a berg, and tied up for the night. Our old friends in distress, the

American schooners, *Blue Sea* and *Eagle*, had followed us on our journey westward, and we saw them not far off, blocked like ourselves. They, too, had tied up to the ice and were waiting for another day. It was faintly consoling to know that they had not beaten us yet in the race to Kolyma.

In the morning we could see open water showing to the north and east, far ahead of us. We were desperately anxious to break through to it if possible. If we could find leads to that open stretch of sea, we might be able to work back on our course by making a wide detour that would carry us past the western end of Wrangell Island. Our earlier experience in that vicinity had shown us that there was a large field of ice to the west of Wrangell, which apparently extended as far south as Cape Nord, and on to the west from the Cape itself. However, there might be leads through it; and it seemed our one chance of getting through.

A promising lead being discovered from the crow's nest in the direction we wished, we decided to take the risk, and leaving the other schooners fast in the ice behind us, battered our way through the strip of intervening ice and entered the lead.

We had not proceeded half a mile along this

narrow waterway, when we observed to our dismay that the head of the lead was closing up rapidly. We just got out—but it was a close call. We had to back the schooner a large part of the way as the lead was too narrow to turn her about. This little episode left us all rather chastened for hours afterward.

Just how dangerous our situation had been was demonstrated later when we learned that the other schooners then marooned near us, the *Eagle* and *Blue Sea*, had decided to work through a new lead that opened near them. The *Eagle* entered first, but had not gone far before the lead closed up so suddenly she was unable to back out.

Equally helpless in the grip of the ice, the *Blue Sea* had to stand by and watch the other schooner caught and crushed to matchwood before her crew's eyes. In a case of this kind, the interval between the crushing of the ship and her actual sinking, is almost nil as the heavy machinery in the engine room will sink her like a plummet.

The crew of the *Eagle* were fortunate enough to save their lives by leaping overside to the solid ice of the field. But there was no time to save food, extra clothing, or stores of any kind. Naturally, the crew of the *Blue Sea* did what they could

to relieve the situation for the shipwrecked men, giving them provisions, blankets, and such heavy garments as they could spare.

The crew of the *Eagle* comprised Captain Hansen, master and owner, and two men, Charles Neussler and a seaman by the name of Olson. One of them lost a large sum in currency which was in his wallet, not more than fifteen feet from him when the crash came. He had no time even to reach for it. Such is the speed with which disaster can arrive in the Arctic!

The point at which the *Iskum* was now so hopelessly blocked again was, we calculated, about five miles to the east of Cape Nord. This proved to be a mistaken estimate for the real distance was somewhere between twelve and fourteen miles. At the time, we believed, optimistically, that the Cape was but a short tramp over the ice. However, long or short journey as it might be, here was the schooner once more fast in the pack, in spite of our constant and heartbreaking work fighting the ice for the past twenty-four hours; and here she appeared likely to remain indefinitely.

It was very discouraging, as so much ice was bound materially to delay our return home, and the Arctic winter was drawing nearer every

day. To add to our troubles, we discovered that our steering gear was out of order; the quadrant leg having been bent during the previous night.

It was decided that we should try to communicate with a Russian trader at Cape Nord with whom we had business. Early that morning Carl Johnson and Alec took the dory and worked their way over the ice close to shore, and then via narrow leads, and breaks in the ice, to the shore itself. Here they were fortunate in encountering a group of Deermen who were bringing their reindeer herds down from the interior to feed near the shore south and west of Cape Nord.

With them Carl was able to converse by means of his knowledge of Chug-chee, and some recourse to the ever-useful sign language. They informed him with great positiveness that there was no possible hope of the schooner getting beyond the Cape, and that we were finally and completely blocked at this point.

As some of these Deermen were going to the Cape, we asked them to tell the Russian that we would follow them on foot later that same day; and at two o'clock Carl, Dave and I started on another of those tedious and exhausting hikes over the shore and the hummocks of ice.

Some husky Deermen

After five hours of the hardest sort of walking, over ice, sand, and gravel, we discovered our mistake about the distance involved, but eventually reached VeLeadgumer's place—he being the trader at Cape Nord for the Russian, Karieff. There we were revived with strong, hot coffee, and blubber. In the Arctic there is nothing quite so indispensable in the way of either food or drink as blubber. When one's vitality is lowered by exposure and the intense cold, a few mouthfuls of this oily, slippery, jellylike substance will start a grateful glow throughout the entire body, sending the sluggish blood coursing actively through the veins once more, and causing a new energy to take possession of jaded nerves and muscles.

Probably at home, with well-cooked meals of recognized familiar dishes, one could not force oneself to swallow raw blubber, much less actually relish it. But I do know that in the far North I came to crave it, not only as a necessity to comfort and well being, but because the taste (what little flavor it can be said to possess) began to seem distinctly pleasant.

We spent the night at the station, returning to the schooner about noon of the following day. VeLeadgumer came back with us. We reached

the schooner at seven-thirty, having covered more than fifteen miles since morning, instead of the supposed five we had, from our position in the ice, optimistically estimated before setting out the previous day.

While exceedingly weary at the end of it, the walk itself was not without its compensations. The country we covered was fascinating. Cape Nord was literally carpeted with small white and pink flowers (of which I do not yet know the name), just peeping out of the moss and tundra, and springing hardily through crevices in the bleak and inhospitable looking rocks.

Carl picked a nosegay for his wife, and the realization of how many miles separated me from doing the same for mine, gave me a quick, acute pang of homesickness. It was not pleasant to contemplate the possibility that we might be in for all winter unless the ice pack soon released us. Though we were perfectly aware of this contingency, nobody talked about it.

CHAPTER XIV

REINDEER TENT, AND FLOWERS

AFTER that first trip to Cape Nord, we made a number of others in the days that followed, and after we had limbered up our muscles with much ice-walking, were able to go some distance beyond the Cape on tramps of exploration.

The country around Cape Nord is interesting largely for its contrasts. The Cape itself is really composed of two great rock promontories which rise almost perpendicularly from the sea to a height of several hundred feet. Between them is an inlet or narrow bay, and back of them, but in plain sight from the sea, is a series of boulders and rocky ledges projecting up from the green and snowy striped tundra. Spread across the tundra along the strips of snow and about the foot of the rocks, there are wonderful narrow carpets of flowers about the size of small wild violets, growing in tightly packed round clusters.

These flowers grew amazingly close to the

ground, and revealed all the colors of the rainbow. It was strange to see them bravely lifting their tiny faces out of the barren, rock-broken tundra, so near to the frozen ocean hemming in the Cape. It gave one a curious sense of seeing summer and winter actually meeting and joining amicable hands across the black rocks of the coast.

To be picked, the flowers had to be pried loose from the tundra with finger tips and the edge of a pocket knife. But I discovered that they really did possess almost infinitesimal stems, so they were not actually moss, though very close to it. We tramped for two miles or more over solid carpets of these lovely little flowers on the two rock promontories of the Cape; carpets so soft and thick and vividly colored it was like walking on the thick pile of some super-gorgeous product of an Oriental loom. Against the bleak, wintry background of the landscape, their delicate, intense blues, their warm mauves and heliotropes, and their pale apple-blossom pinks shone with a really startling loveliness.

The air was cold, nipping one's fingers and toes if not moving briskly; but these delicate little Arctic flowers bloomed on undisturbed in an atmosphere that would have speedily frozen even the

hardiest of their brothers and sisters back in my native country.

All that we could see on these hikes of ours confirmed the pessimistic reports of the native hunters we had met, who had assured us there was no possible chance of the schooner being able to break through the ice farther west.

The settlement at Cape Nord was composed mainly of natives and half breeds, though we met a few Russians engaged in trading, most of whom appeared to be located there more or less permanently and were living with native women.

We found the natives along this part of the coast an interesting change after our too-persistent hordes of visiting Chug-chees. After leaving Kaluchin, one meets fewer and fewer of the latter, and the farther west one goes, the deeper one penetrates into the country of the Deermen. These reindeer herders were a quite different, and it seemed to us, a much higher type than either Chug-chee or Eskimo. They were taller, and more alert, both physically and mentally. Shrewd traders, too, though spoiled somewhat by unfair dealing, making them suspicious and inclined to be grasping.

They spoke a dialect somewhat different from Chug-chee, and there was a slight difference in

their methods of igloo construction. Unlike the Chug-chee, they were for the most part, content with one wife, though occasionally I saw one with two. Whether this moderation was an economic measure, or merely tribal custom, I was unable to learn.

When I use the word tribe or tribal, in connection either with the Chug-chees or Deermen, they are, strictly speaking, incorrect. These natives do not band themselves together in tribes, as our North American Indians do; but live in scattered settlements, or villages, having friendly and trading relations between communities, but no common chief or government. Yet the racial differences are very distinct between the various types of native.

The Deermen hunt and trap, as do the Chug-chees, but their main reliance for food, clothing and barter, is on their immense reindeer herds, which are not the property of individuals, but a sort of community possession. These are tended by the children of the village. Sometimes, we learned, these children will be up in the hills for weeks, alone with their placid, browsing charges. But we saw, too, that there was always an igloo or two in the settlement from which (with an

antiquated ship's spyglass, acquired in the way of trade), some old woman, mother or grandmother of one of the little herders, was able to keep a watchful eye on the movements of the herd, and report that all was well with the youngsters on guard up there.

Many a time I have come on a wrinkled, toothless native woman, spyglass pressed close to her peering old eyes, standing patiently for half-hours at a time by her igloo doorway, assuring herself that no trouble had come to the youngster several miles away. On at least one occasion, I was able to watch the preparations of one of these little sturdy, resourceful native boys, to face a sudden snowstorm, by making clever use of the only available shelter at hand—the hairy bodies of the reindeer themselves.

The little chap's head might be no higher than the reindeer's neck, yet he would fearlessly kick and tug two of the animals into the position he wanted them to assume against the storm; force them with another savage kick, to lie down side by side and then, himself, slip softly in between the two big warm bodies, and lie there snug and sheltered until the blizzard had blown itself out. I suppose it is splendid training for the boys in

self-reliance, makes them hardy in body, and instills a habit of resourcefulness and courage early in life, which is a vital factor in native existence. However, to our Anglo-Saxon trained minds, it seemed a bit Spartan, for many of the children were very young.

. . . . . .

In all we were fast in the ice pack twelve miles to the eastward of Cape Nord twelve days. It was a trying time for everyone on board, as we had absolutely no assurance we should not be there all winter. The weather, too, was dampening to the spirits. It alternately hailed and snowed for practically the entire period. Toward the end of the time, the snow increased to blizzard violence, and froze solidly to deck, cargo, and rigging, making it hard to get about.

The two sailors were kept almost steadily at work scraping the snow off the deck cargo, and shaking it out of the tarpaulins. It was gruelling and discouraging labor. No sooner did they have things fairly clear, than the snow would come down harder than ever, accompanied by icy blasts of wind out of the northwest, and the work all had to be done over again.

On the third day of our ice imprisonment, the

One of the smallest herders with his "Dad" and "Grand-dad"

Carl Johnson on the right

Chukotsk, an American power schooner, came up through the ice lanes to the eastward, and being able to proceed no farther, tied up to a berg like the rest of us. Far off toward the eastern horizon, we could make out still another boat, also frozen in, which, counting ourselves, the *Chukotsk*, and the *Blue Sea*, made four schooners all blockaded within a radius of twenty miles of Cape Nord. All were waiting impatiently for leads to open and let them proceed around the Cape. It was companionable, of course, but since none of them could find a way to break through, for all their efforts, our own case seemed doubly hopeless.

Finally, it was decided that Carl Johnson should make the trip overland to Cape Nord, to see whether it would be possible to procure sufficient lumber to build winter quarters on the shore. This was in case the worst came to the worst and we were overtaken by the winter night where we were. So the first day the storm let up for one of its periodical lulls, Carl started for the Cape; while John the engineer, with Alec and Attua, dragged the dory out on the ice to collect fresh snow for our water tank.

Carl returned from the Cape the following day, having been unsuccessful in his quest for lumber.

He had hardly reached the schooner before the snow commenced again, harder than ever.

An amusing little incident that somewhat broke the monotony of the continual snow and wind, was the appearance of an Arctic fox on the ice beside the schooner. The little fellow seemed intensely interested in the vessel, and walked about us in a half circle, his beady, black eyes appearing to miss no smallest detail. Then, catching sight of someone moving about on deck, he became alarmed and retired a short distance hurriedly, where he seated himself on the snow-covered ice, still gazing at us curiously.

A little later he climbed a nearby ice summit and approached us once more, but cautiously this time, looking down intently. After a prolonged study of the curious monster (as he no doubt considered the *Iskum*) which had suddenly invaded his peaceful snow-and-ice solitude, he trotted off, and we did not see him again. We made no attempt to shoot him, as his summer coat was valueless for trade purposes.

By this time we were all thoroughly convinced that we should not be able to work the schooner even so far west as Cape Nord, and that Kolyma was therefore out of the question that season.

Fast in the pack

We discussed the possibility of making the trip to the west by dog team, but found, after investigation, and questioning the natives at Cape Nord, that it would be highly unsatisfactory traveling. We should have to make many return trips if we were to transport all our barter. The shore ice was so broken up, and softened by recurring thaws and freezes, that in long stretches the dogs could not be handled at all. In these spots the snow and pack-ice had disintegrated almost entirely, bringing the gravel and bare tundra to the surface; so that a sled, heavily laden with furs and trade goods, would be too great a strain on the dogs.

This left us, as our sole alternative, the piled up and practically impassable snow fields out on the sea, which we dared not attempt. If time had not been such an important factor, we could have made a profitable excursion inland by sled-and-dog team to the south, along the snow-crusted highlands, where travel was easier, visiting the many small igloo villages we knew we should find there. Valuable furs could doubtless be obtained in this uncharted country, on favorable terms. But unless we intended deliberately to remain in the North all winter, such a trip would consume

too much precious time. We must be out of the Arctic, through Behring Straits and into the Pacific, by early October, before the Arctic, and Behring Sea, became ice-blocked.

While we were debating the pros and cons of the situation, the Astrosoffs decided they would have their goods taken from the schooner to Cape Nord by sled, and trust to being able to arrange for their further transport to Kolyma.

The following day the weather was warmer, and the wind shifted from northwest to west. The snow had stopped entirely now, and the atmosphere was hazy, with very low visibility. The power schooner, *Chukotsk*, was able to work her way through newly opened leads and came alongside us. Mr. Astrosoff then conceived the notion of having his goods trans-shipped to the *Chukotsk*, which would leave us free to turn back eastward if we chose. The *Chukotsk* was a larger vessel than the *Iskum*, and had a better chance of breaking through to Cape Nord should opportunity offer. This decided Mr. Astrosoff to throw in his lot with her. He was able to make a deal with her captain to take Madame Astrosoff, himself, and their possessions aboard, after which the crews of both schooners were busy during the rest of

the day transferring their bales of furs and household utensils to the *Chukotsk*.

We were all sorry to part from the Astrosoffs, as they had been interesting traveling companions, making no trouble, and always willing to lend a hand at anything that arose to make the voyage easier or pleasanter for the rest of us.

Andria, the Communist, decided to leave us here also, and go on to Cape Nord on foot along the shore. He was not as much of a loss as the other two; still, I had found some good points in this man in spite of his past record, and he certainly had been tractable enough while on the schooner.

After the trans-shipping of Astrosoff's goods, all hands turned to and helped rearrange our own cargo so as to take the present starboard list off the schooner, and raise her stern as high above the ice as possible. Her ring-bolt and rudder chain attachment had been rather badly damaged in some of our recent ice-fighting, causing her to leak into the engine bed.

By the middle of the morning, however, the drizzle of rain then falling turned to hail so we knocked off work for the time being. The *Iskum* and *Chukotsk* were still side by side, in the same lead, and after some discussion we decided to pull

out back of the latter. Our plan was to fight our way through the ice to a point about seven miles to the east of our present position, where Acting-Captain Putta believed there might be a better chance of leads opening in the direction of the Cape.

I may add here that in starting our engine we nearly set both the *Chukotsk* and ourselves on fire, for the *Iskum* had lain so long in the ice that carbon had collected, particularly in the large muffler, and in back-firing, sent sparks and flames from the stack all over both schooners. The crew of the *Chukotsk* complained that we had a "hell of a way of saying goodbye."

On board the *Iskum*, we all felt that any change must be for the better, after our long, monotonous period of inaction. It was a relief to be battering the ice once more, no matter how slow our progress. There were more open lanes to the eastward, and by eight that evening we had reached the point where the *Chukotsk* had been lying when we first spied her masts against the horizon early in our ice imprisonment. Here we tied up to a berg, running out two lines to keep the schooner from swinging against the berg itself—a precaution rendered the more advisable as the barometer was rapidly going down.

The expected storm broke at midnight in heavy gusts of rain, hail and wind. The wind died down after a short time—it blew violently enough while it lasted—but the rain continued all night. Strange as it may sound, we welcomed the sound of the hail and rain on the decks. Rain meant a thaw, if only a temporary one; and the briefest thaw might open navigable leads.

CHAPTER XV

"ABOUT-FACE"

WE woke the following morning to see streamers of rain still beating against our port-holes. A number of leads had opened in the night between ourselves and the berth we had quit yesterday, and during the morning two of our fellow prisoners, the schooners *Chukotsk* and *Blue Sea* worked up through them to join us. They tied up to the end and side of our berg.

Everyone was cautioned not to venture out on the berg itself, except when necessary in making the lines fast or casting off, as the sea had dangerously undermined its base. The ice composing the berg had a distinct blue tone. In places near the schooner where great caverns had been washed in its side, I was strongly reminded of the Blue Grotto at Capri.

I was very much tempted to explore one of these caverns, for the blue light must have been highly spectacular inside. However, on second

thought, I decided the risk would be a boy's piece of fool-hardiness since there was nothing to be gained except the æsthetic pleasure of the view.

A little before midnight, finding that with the continued rain the berg was in actual danger of breaking up, we signaled the other schooners, and casting off our lines, moved about two miles farther east to another berg, where we once more tied up. The other schooners followed us, but selected a berg farther out for a mooring.

It was Carl Johnson who advised us to run in nearer the shore, as we should thus be within easier access of any wandering natives—Deermen, principally, who might be bringing their herds down to the level ground along the shore to feed, as they do about this time each year. From them we could learn something about ice conditions on the other side of the Cape, and about our chances of making Kolyma in a last, desperate race against time.

Carl's suggestion proved a happy one, for on the very next morning a small group of Deermen came out to the schooner, across the ice. They had come mostly along the frozen beach from the westward, and with Carl acting as interpreter, we were able to get from them a very discouraging

report of what we were up against. They assured us that the ice stretched solidly ahead of us for ninety miles, and extended off shore for at least forty or fifty. This was as far as they had traveled, hunting seal and polar bear.

It looked like bad business, so I called a conference to decide what was to be done. There was not much choice left us, and it was speedily agreed that we would only lose valuable time in remaining where we were on the chance that leads might open and let us through to the west.

The other schooners were evidently resolved to take that chance, even with the risk of being ice-bound all winter; but that was their affair, and we could take the only course that seemed best to us. This was to 'bout ship without more delay, and start back for East Cape, doing all the trading from Cape Nord to East Cape which had not been taken care of on the trip out because of our hurry in working westward.

To anticipate a little—in proof of our new plan being a sound one—we cleaned up on the return trip among other furs no less than four hundred handsome white fox skins. These we acquired in the remotest and most out-of-the-way places, visited largely by means of the dory, or with the sled

and dogs; up narrow inlets, into small ice-locked bays, and tundra-bordered lagoons, along the shores of which we came upon a few huddled igloos, the usual herd of reindeer, and some excellent bargains in skins.

When it was definitely settled that we would make no further attempt to work to the west, I directed the Captain to go over to the berg where our companion schooners were moored, and ask if we could take any letters back with us, or execute commissions of any kind for them on the return trip.

He came back with several letters which we agreed to mail in the States. At seven that evening we pulled out for the eastward, turning our backs on that elusive "Never-Never Country" we had been seeking so long and found nowhere, except on our inaccurate and misleading maps: *Kolyma.*

The place exists, and people do live there, because our Company transacts business with them each year; otherwise I should be tempted to class it with places in the fabulous tales of Sinbad the Sailor.

CHAPTER XVI

NATIVE TEA-PARTIES

ON our return trip to East Cape we found more open water, although we were still often troubled by ice. We made good use of our power dory now, sending it ahead of the schooner with two men, for the double purpose of testing leads and water lanes, and searching the shore for traces of igloo villages, or reindeer tracks—which last meant a settlement farther inland.

Carl Johnson and his wife were perhaps the most disappointed of all our ship's company at our decision to turn east. They had counted on the opportunity to reach Chaun Bay or Kolyma, and settle for the long, hard winter ahead where they would have some small contact with white neighbors. Forced to return and face their old troubles at Kaluchin was a bitter blow, but they had both proved during the previous winter that they were as game as one could ask, and made no complaints now, realizing we had done our best for them.

At least, as Carl pointed out, the voyage had been a change, and had heartened them both with the new scenes and companionships it had offered. So they were returning to their old station better equipped, mentally, to endure the loneliness and difficulties of the situation.

The second day of our return trip, keeping a sharp lookout for signs of natives, the men in the dory ahead reported reindeer tracks, so we tied up to a convenient berg. Carl, the little native boy Attua, Ivan the sailor, and I all went ashore, and made our way inland over the boggy, water-soaked tundra for a matter of several miles.

We were rewarded at the end of the tramp by finding a small village of skin igloos; and after we had aroused the natives—who all appeared to be napping or smoking peaceful pipes in the igloos' interiors—we introduced ourselves and our errand more or less intelligibly, and effected some fair trades.

I made a deal with a young Yakaghire Deerman for two freshly killed reindeer, as the schooner was out of meat. Most of the inhabitants of the village accompanied us back to the *Iskum*, and came on board to look us over, exactly as our Chug-chee friends used to do. Also like the

latter, they approved of us so heartily that they remained on board all night, getting in everyone's way. But no one had the heart to send them ashore until they had satisfied their curiosity.

One of these savages, in his eagerness to get on the schooner, fell overboard when the hide rope on his skin boat parted. When we succeeded in fishing him out of the icy water, he had been almost frozen as well as nearly drowned. We spent half that night reviving him. However, a minor incident like that marred the occasion for nobody—least of all for the victim, who appeared to regard the fuss made in restoring him as a sort of distinction. In fact, when he had recovered sufficiently to take in what was happening, he used our sympathy to push an unfair advantage in some trades he wished to make. As I said before, they are canny traders, these Deermen; and one had perpetually to be on one's guard so as not to be taken in.

The following day the schooner was still overrun with natives, with new comers from more distant villages arriving almost hourly. I think I have remarked several times, on the mysterious rapidity with which news in the Arctic travels. It continued to be a source of amazement to me,

the more I observed the effective results of what I named their "invisible telegraph." The news seems to spread along the line to natives that are continually hunting on the icy shores. Many of these natives have dogs and sleds; a few have reindeer and occasionally the living word is speeded on its way by wig-wags and signals.

It was working overtime now, notifying natives in the remote, uncharted interior, that a ship had arrived, and that here was a perhaps never-to-be-repeated opportunity to trade. Usually vessels spend so much time working far to the westward in reaching the larger trade centers, that on the return voyage to East Cape they have little time left to waste on visits to small, unimportant settlements along the shore. They are then racing against the swift approach of the long winter night which, when it once shuts down, lays its bars of ice and blackness across the path to the outside world. All unlucky ships left on its inner side are kept prisoners until spring.

The Deermen along this part of the shore near Cape Nord had principally fawn (baby reindeer) and seal skins to barter, but we got the pick of these. The fresh reindeer meat I had bargained for was brought aboard and we hung it high over-

head in the rigging. The natives in this part of the world are eaters of raw meat and fish, and we felt it wise to remove temptation from our visitors, who were now far too numerous for us to keep an eye on all their movements.

It was the middle of the next afternoon before the Deermen departed reluctantly, and we proceeded on our way, shaping a course for Vankarem. However, by seven that same evening we had spied another, larger igloo village quite near the shore, and decided to investigate the trade prospects there.

Dave Rutherford and Carl undertook the trading this time, and managed exceptionally well. They secured from the natives a number of good skins, and we were all invited to drink tea in one of the igloos when the trading was over. The idea of being invited to a tea drinking in the Siberian Arctic may sound a bit incongruous, but it is a fact that the natives—particularly these Deermen—are great tea drinkers (they probably acquired the habit first from Russian traders), and make quite a ceremony of offering it to guests.

Part of all trades up there include demands on the natives' side for the prettiest enamelware cups and saucers the traders can supply. Every igloo

I entered had its equipment for drinking tea kept scrupulously clean. Perhaps the most forceful comparison I can think of is to say this enamel-ware is as clean as most other things in the igloo are *not*.

Usually they make little mats of soft seal skin and place one of these between each saucer in the pile to keep the edges from rubbing each other and chipping. Cups are kept in the same way, each carefully protected by a little mat of fur—usually seal skin. And the pride with which they bring out the cups and saucers for a visitor, and make the tea, is both pathetic and very pleasant to watch. They are so like big children displaying some specially treasured possession.

The natives seat themselves in a big circle on the gravel or dry sandy floor of the igloo, drinking with great care and enjoyment; and their manners, on this particular occasion at least, are quite irreproachable—with one exception. They have an odd custom of placing a lump of sugar (they insist upon loaf sugar when they can get it) in their mouths instead of in their cups, holding it just back of their front teeth, and then sucking the tea through it.

The result of a whole igloo-full of tea-drink-

ing natives all sucking gravely in unison, is a bit too noisy to be approved by the current books on etiquette. But the tea has a specially delicious flavor when drunk that way, which has our daintier custom beaten to a frazzle. I know, because they converted me at the first native tea party I attended, and I clung to the custom thereafter for the entire time we were in the Arctic. Even now once in a while when I'm quite alone, and perhaps for the sake of old times of course—but try it for yourself and see!

CHAPTER XVII

THE DEERMEN

THE various and extended trips which we made to these igloo settlements on the return trip to East Cape frequently necessitated walking for miles across boggy green tundra, where reindeer were being herded in large numbers. The herds are found in this locality particularly during the summer months, when the Deermen bring the winter skins north to the coast, for trade with their Chug-chee neighbors, as well as with the Americans and traders of other nations.

These visits of ours to their settlements permitted a close study of the igloo life of the Deermen, as compared with that of the Chug-chees, and we discovered that the two were much alike in most respects. We found, however, that the children of the Deermen were not particular about keeping to the back (or living) compartment of the igloo when they had shed the heavy skin clothing of outdoors, and wore nothing but their "birthday clothes."

I think I may safely assert that the Chug-chee, old or young, is never found in the fore part of his igloo unclad, but we noticed a number of exceptions to this habit on the part of the Deermen, who are unquestionably, for the most part, Chuvanes or Yakaghires. The former tribes (I use the word for convenience sake, though as I explained previously, none of the natives of Arctic Siberia group themselves in tribes, as we understand the term) are found around and to the south of Chaun Bay; while the latter or Yakaghires, who are also herders of reindeer on a smaller scale, are found in the region between the Kolyma and Lena rivers.

The Deermen are more of a nomad race than the Chug-chees, shifting camp frequently to follow the roving of their reindeer herds in search for feeding grounds.

The older folk among them, as a rule, remain at one of the main settlements to which the rest of the tribe return at intervals throughout the year. The women seem to have a very substantial say in the affairs of the tribe—particularly the older women. I know that on more than one occasion they took a hand in our trading operations, and rearranged the terms to suit their own ideas.

The general appearance of a Deerman's village

Deerman's igloo with sleds lashed together against storms

is a good deal like one of our own gypsy camps at home; giving the impression of the tribe's readiness for a quick start to new fields at a moment's notice. Most of the reindeer and faun skins which are prepared for barter are piled in high stacks on the big sleds which are waiting to transport them to the nearest trading station. These sleds, by the way, are larger than those used by the Chug-chees; and the sled-dogs, too, seem particularly big and strong.

The reindeer skins offered us were often very highly colored, running the gamut from brown to black and white, including the lighter shades between. The short-haired summer skins are specially prized by the native women, although traders and dealers appear not to see any difference in value. But since the women have often a deciding voice in the trades, their opinions have to be taken into account.

I remember one case in particular when an old woman took issue with three very tall and savage-looking natives (one of whom was her husband), about trading us an entire sled-load of skins. We stood patiently on one side, hoping they would arrive at some settlement so the trading could be resumed. But in a very few minutes we were

surprised to see the old lady place herself with her back against the pile of skins and draw the knife they all wear in the skin girdles about their bodies. She waved this about with an air of determination and stamped her foot, which, as everyone recognized immediately, was a final declaration of war.

The men looked at each other and then at us, laughed sheepishly, and giving up the argument retired to the igloo, whither we were politely invited for tea. Afterward the wife, who had recovered from her wrath as soon as she had gained the day, came in and joined us quite amicably in the tea-drinking.

When the prolonged ceremony of "afternoon tea" came to an end, the same old woman took me off alone to the sled of skins they had been disputing about, and pulled out from the leashes of native skin rope with which the stack was bound, three very fine pelts. She indicated by signs that I might have these if I wished, but no more; and pointing to other sleds standing nearby, also heavily laden with skins, made me understand that she intended returning to the schooner with some of the men of the tribe when we went back and looking both ourselves and the ship over carefully.

Go with us she did, and personally conducted a rigid and interested inspection of the trade goods we had to offer in payment before she signified her approval. This important matter settled to everybody's satisfaction, she allowed some of the Deermen to return to camp and bring down the laden sleds for the consummation of the trades begun earlier in the day.

The time when the trader could put his own price on skins and ivories has passed. The natives know what they want, and are not to be inveigled into accepting anything else. They examine the trader's store of flour, tobacco, tea, sugar and all the other staples they require, and must be convinced that everything offered them is the best obtainable. They are especially partial to Lipton's Tea and Black Navy Tobacco, and if you have these brands they insist upon having them.

They are keen traders, as I have stated, but they are entirely to be relied upon when they have once passed their word about their side of the bargain; and it is fatal to a trader's chances of further business with them, if he cannot be counted on to keep an equally good faith.

I have taken part in many trades without an interpreter, where everything went smoothly by

signs and the use of native names for the usual commodities: these names being more or less the same with Chug-chees, Chuvanes, and Yakaghires. For example "pingwood" means flour pretty generally through that part of the Siberian Arctic; "tàlk" is tobacco; "soccer," sugar, etc.

The native holds up one, two or three fingers to indicate the number of boxes or pounds he desires, and says "pingwood" or "soccer" as the case may be. Since the sugar and tobacco come in boxes, and the flour in sacks, the mere mention of the article required, accompanied by the raising of a finger or two, sets the trade in operation intelligibly on both sides.

If the trading is being conducted on the schooner's deck (and most of it is done there in summer), the native will bring on board one of the great sealskin sacks made from the whole body of the seal, which are carried in his skin boat. From this he will probably pull one fox skin, shake it out with a flourish, and place it on the deck with an air of tremendous impressiveness, as much as to say: "See how wonderful this is!"

These wily native traders, however, always keep their poorest barter on top of the sack while way

down at the bottom will be the really high-class pelts we are hoping to acquire.

When this first skin has gone down then it is your turn to play. Perhaps you will put down one box of tobacco (supposing this is a trade for that commodity). The old savage will be sure to shake his head with a good-natured grin. He has no idea of letting even a poor fox skin go for so little; but on your side you must not make the mistake of putting down too much tobacco in the beginning of the bargaining. The harder the struggle the more value he will set on what he finally gains (human nature being much the same the world over).

The native and you both grin and wave your hands at one another for a while, each good-naturedly trying to induce the other to offer better terms first. If the deadlock lasts more than a minute or so, some other native usually happens casually along, and will immediately back up his friend or relative by going into an elaborate pantomime of admiration for the skin being offered you. The two will then hold a long discussion of which you, of course, get only the violent gesticulations accompanying the rapid flow of native speech.

After a minute or two of this, if you hold firm they will reluctantly haul out of the sack three or four hair seal skins, worth no more than fifty cents or so apiece. These are laid ostentatiously on the deck beside the original offering, and with many grimaces expressive of appreciation of their wonderful value, they will give you to understand what a rare bargain you are getting. Sometimes, for good measure, they will throw in two or three Siberian rabbit skins—really beautiful in themselves, but worth very little in the way of actual trade.

Then it is up to you to bring out something more to place beside your box of tobacco. Of course while the native sticks to poor furs you do not offer your best goods; but if he begins to bring out a better grade, you will do well to put down some enamel cups of white ware, to which they are especially partial. In recent years they will not use tin cups at all if they can obtain enamelware from the traders.

As a rule, the native will fix his fancy on something from your store like a string of brightly colored beads, some particular kind of tea, or a copper kettle. Often he becomes so violently smitten with this object of his desire that he

cannot, even for the sake of driving a better bargain, keep his admiring wonder to himself. In this respect he is the opposite of the North American Indian, who, at the start of a deal, will pay no attention to the article he really wants. But the Deerman, or Chug-chee will pat and fondle the article uttering little grunts of delight, so that often you can gauge quite accurately how far he will be willing to go in the way of barter, in order to obtain it.

Money as a factor in trading is quite unknown west of East Cape and Whalen along the Siberian coast, except up the Kolyma river where there are Russian settlements. Not only is money unknown but time and distance seem negligible as well. With the native of this region all distance is computed by how many swings of the sun from east to west he has seen while on the journey. Up there, of course, in midsummer the sun never rises or sets; it merely swings in a circle. So if the native has been two days on his hunt he will point at the sun and then move his arm in a wide sweep, once—twice: two days' journey. Two long swings of his arm and a half swing: two and a half days, journey, etc. Time, as we understand it, by hours and minutes, simply does not exist.

The Deermen are wonderful foot travelers, both on the sea ice and along the shore. It is practically impossible to keep up with them on a long hike, for they will walk so long and so far without regard to time and distance as we understand both, that they tire out the hardiest white man.

For food on these journeys, they will munch a little dried meat—walrus, seal, bear or perhaps reindeer—which they carry in a skin pouch attached to the belt (also of skin) which each native wears. They will drink at any little creek or if they are out on sea ice there is always a patch of snow to be found which will give them fresh water. Often, too, they carry a skin bottle filled with water, along with the pouch of dried meat. So it may be seen that their traveling equipment is light and easily managed.

Our return voyage to East Cape was made in a very leisurely manner, with frequent stops at all the small igloo settlements along the shore to visit the natives, drink tea ceremoniously and trade. Consequently we had a most unusual opportunity for learning a good deal about their mode of life, habits and customs. Personally I found the Deermen more interesting than the Chug-chees; more definitely individual somehow. I took pains to

talk to them, and ask questions, either with signs and my very limited supply of native words, or through an interpreter when one was available.

I was curious to learn whether they had a religion, or beliefs, but I never saw any rites or services which indicated anything of the kind; and so far as I could discover they have not even medicine men.

I saw no skin drums or other native musician instruments in their igloos though I was always looking for such things. Some of them possessed antiquated phonographs, which of course they had acquired from the traders and seemed crazy about. I did see a number of big skin balls on occasions, something like our own footballs, which the native children play with and kick about, but except for them I noticed no playthings for the youngsters. The Deermen train their children early to be useful, as most of the care of the big reindeer herds is left to them; so perhaps they feel that toys are superfluous.

CHAPTER XVIII

DISCOVERIES

OF the dozen or so native villages at which we touched for trade on the return trip from Cape Nord, at least five (situated farther inland from the coast) had never before been visited by white men. Although they did not, as far as outward appearances go, differ from the other settlement we stopped at, the knowledge that we were actually the first of our kind to enter them furnished a separate interest and appeal.

We had picked up a few words and phrases of both the Chug-chee, Chuvane and Yakaghire dialects, and had become gratifyingly proficient in the common sign language. So even when an interpreter was not handy, we managed to conduct a conversation with one or another of the natives in each of these "unknown villages" of our discovery. Dave became quite proficient in this.

Our party was now interested principally in barter, and such conversations as were held with the inhabitants had to do with furs, ivory, and

whalebone on one side and sugar, flour, tea, enamelware and tobacco on the other. That, of course, was as it should be considering the reason for the presence of the *Iskum* in those waters. We were traders on a trading errand, and to attend to business was certainly in order.

However, I was new to this country "up North of Beyond" as one might designate it, and the explorer's fever was on me. I wanted to find out all I could about the real life of the native, and where would I again have such a chance as here in these five villages where no contact with my own race had ever been made! Accordingly, in each case I made a point of seeking some old man or woman of the tribe (again using the word "tribe" for convenience, with apologies to strict accuracy), and asked as many questions as I could render intelligible with the limited vocabulary at my command.

I cannot say that I succeeded in making any brilliant discoveries—for, after all, the natives could only talk of the simple fundamentals: their needs of the moment and our ability to gratify these from our trade goods; their prospects of hunting and fishing; their herds and their own families. It was more the things I observed in

my visits that showed me something of interest than any information my actual questions elicited.

Much of what I observed was confirmatory of what I had already seen in the other large settlements we had traded in. Yet here where the people were meeting their first representatives of the white race, I had a feeling that everything I saw, noted and heard of their daily lives, habits and customs, could be taken as the final confirmation of all my earlier observations. The children at first would run from us and shriek with terror. But chewing gum, candies, and beads for the women, finally won the confidence of all.

One thing I had especially noticed was the devotion of native mothers—Chug-chee, Chuvane and Yakaghire alike—to their children. While these children are still too young to walk far, they are carried by the mother somewhat in the fashion called "pick-a-pack" in my young days. The baby sits astride the mother's neck, with its short legs stretching across her shoulders, and in this position they travel long distances together—neither the small rider nor its patient steed apparently tiring in the least.

When the women came out to the schooner with their husbands to trade they brought the babies

A Chug-chee mother carrying her child with its legs around her neck, and a bunch of pup-huskies

along as a matter of course. On several occasions, when a sudden storm of rain, hail or snow came up while they were still on board, I have seen a mother take off her own warm fur parka and wrap the youngster in it, snugly and safely; while she herself stood unconcernedly, with the smooth brown skin of her body bared to the icy winds and the driving storm. Time and again I have known that to happen and though we always hunted up some seal skins or Army blankets to give the mother to wrap herself in, she never seemed to think she had done anything fine or unusual in removing her own garment to keep her baby warm. Of course, the kind of common-sense we are taught at home might have suggested her bringing along an extra skin or two to "wrap Baby Bunting in," but as that never seemed to occur to her, I can only say that she always insisted on being the one to bear the brunt of her shortsightedness.

The Deermen particularly have, as I remarked before, rather Spartan ideas on putting the children to work very young. But I always found that some older person in the village was detailed to keep an eye on their movements—like the old women I used to see watching the youthful reindeer-herders through an ancient ship's glass

from their igloo doorways. If anything had gone amiss up in the hills, their sharp old eyes would have detected signs of it and a rescue party doubtless would have been despatched in short order.

I got the native names of four villages we unquestionably discovered, and give them here—the spelling being necessarily phonetic since they have never before now been written. Their geographical positions are of course not indicated on any maps extant, but they lie along the shore—mostly inland—and therefore out of the track of the few trading schooners which pass on their way from East Cape to Cape Nord, Chaun Bay and Kolyma. Here they are:

Ratano
Er-e-v-nook
Wil-kut-eno
Tep-ka

There was no doubt that we were the first white men who had ever been seen in them. The dogs were savage, and the children, as stated, ran from us in terror. Their elders assured me as best they could that no one like us had ever been there before, though some had heard vague reports from natives of other settlements that people with white skins came once a year from some far-off

country to give all manner of wonderful foods and dishes for the igloos in exchange for reindeer, fox and bear skins.

They took to our goods with enthusiasm, and were less suspicious and grasping in the matter of barter than those natives who had done habitual business with foreign traders. I may add here in justice to ourselves and the policy of the company we represented, that no one in our party had any idea of taking advantage of this childlike friendliness, or dealing in any way unfairly with them. This—be it said in passing—is not only good ethics but equally good business.

I made a list in a little memorandum book I happened to be carrying in my pocket, of a number of the more usual native words I ran across in trading.

Soc-ar.....sugar in both Chug-chee and the dialects of the Deermen
Ping-wood..... .flour
Tàlk.....tobacco
Ramow-talk.....smoking tobacco
Ka-lup-talk.....chewing tobacco
Chy.....tea (this is probably a corruption of the Russian word)
Kirpets.....Russian tea (they have learned to prefer Lipton's however)

Ko-ko-na-chy.....the finest tea you have in your stores
Siosin-chy.....package of tea
Cow-cow.....bread
Meeh-e-meek.....matches (very guttural)
El-gar.....white fox (this is the Chug-chee word)
Echcar.....white fox (Chuvane variation)
Echlgar-warkan.....have you any fox skins? (Both Chug-chee and Chuvane understand this)
En-na-ken.....wolf (I was never able to place these two words; sometimes one was understood by Chuvane, sometimes by Chug-chee. I used to try first one, then the other, till I got a response.)
En-an.....wolf
Nel-gen.....wolf skin
Umka-nalgen.....polar bear skin
Kagen-nelgen.....grizzly or brown bear skin
Capper.....wolverine
A-kelpa.....quick
Marende.....slow, or slowly
Yo-yo.....by-and-bye (Chug-chee)

I also learned to count up to twenty and as the lengthy numerals may prove amusing, I add them.

Ne-nan-son.....one
Neruk.....two

Neroke.....three
Ne-rock.....four
Mis-ling-a.....five
Ne-nan-mis-ling-a...six (one and five)
Neruk-mis-ling-a....seven (two and five)
Am-go-rote.....eight
Ko-nas-ink.....nine
Min-get-te.....ten

From there you add one and ten, two and ten, etc., up to fifteen, which is *Kil-yen-kin*. Then add to that one, two and three, etc., up to twenty, which is *Kele-kin*.

Another incident, of a sort which I have cited previously, gave me further insight into some of the native ideas and habits. It was when I came on a walrus herd on the beach. The ice on which they had evidently been lying had been washed far up on the shore by a storm and unusually high tide, and the animals seemed perfectly helpless, and unable to make their way back to the sea.

Natives from the nearest settlement had discovered their predicament, probably being attracted there by the sound of the animals' united roaring and grunting, which carried a long way in the still, cold air. Instead of treating the presence of the virtually imprisoned herd right at their doors as a Godsend, and killing as many as they could,

the natives were actually working with might and main to get the huge, panic-stricken monsters safely off the beach, and back onto sea ice once more, where they would be able to save themselves.

I mention this again because it throws an amazing sidelight on the savage temperament, and their instinct to protect their animals which are a vital part of their own existence. They will hunt for food and for skins when they are needed but they will not indulge in the kind of wholesale slaughter by which some of our American Indians (and their successors, the early white hunters in the West) finally exterminated the buffalo herds on the prairies.

A kindly people, these Chug-chee, Chuvane and Yakaghire friends of ours; wise, too, after their own fashion, hospitable, generous to each other and to visiting strangers like ourselves; brave, honest and more than a little curious, as children are. I have regretted that weather and the business conditions of this voyage, prevented a longer and more leisurely study of these strange and interesting people.

CHAPTER XIX

MINERALS

ALL this part of Siberia, lying between the Chukotsk Peninsula and the Kolyma and Indigirka rivers, is entirely unexplored country, save for the occasional visits of traders; and even their contact with the native inhabitants has been confined to the Arctic coast.

In proceeding back to East Cape we knew our route and the ice conditions, which enabled us to make extensive inland trips at various points along the shore. I was able to make a number of careful observations, not only of the savage people themselves, but of the geographical formation and the mineral indications of the country as well. All these observations, of course, had to be made in a decidedly primitive fashion, as we were not long enough at any one spot to permit of a thorough investigation.

Between Kaluchin and Chaun Bay one comes upon numerous lagoons, with narrow sand or rock bars separating them from the sea itself. As these

often stretch far inland, they interfere seriously with the taking of connected observations along the shore. Therefore we were forced to be content in the main with prospecting at the mouths of rivers or creeks, or along the lagoon shores, where the ground was not too boggy.

All one sees of Arctic rivers and streams is a snow-covered valley, of varying width, between rocky buttes—usually snow-covered also. But following one of these undulating snow-ravines to its mouth we found, in almost every case, a stream of water, and generally a fairly good-sized stream at that, flowing from under the snow and ice into the sea.

At the mouths of as many of these streams and rivers as possible, I made a careful examination of the wash and am fully convinced that both copper and gold will, in the ages to come, be found in the interior of Arctic Siberia. That the Lena and rivers beyond it are rich in minerals is already well known. Gold has even been discovered in creeks flowing into the Kolyma. From my own observations eastward from Chaun Bay, of the many indications in the sandy and gravelly wash along the lagoons and at river mouths, I am certain that copper will be found there—Chalco-Pyrite,

chiefly. Blue and highly colored samples are occasionally seen which would indicate Bornite. And we found a number of green specimens indicating carbonate of copper.

We also saw some fine colorings of gold, but this occurred only twice on the entire trip, and they had evidently—in both instances,—traveled a long way. The barren rocks, as they project upward from the ice and snow along the seriated ridges, do not show any leads or indications of minerals, and this would seem to indicate that the mineral wash which I have just mentioned must come from far up the creeks and rivers from leads or placer deposits some distance south of the Siberian Arctic shore. Most of that region is covered with snow and ice, and one must also take into account not only the presence of more or less savage natives but the great distances the ore must be transported, so that the difficulties in the way of active prospecting are apparent.

By the middle of August we had worked down the coast as far as Cape Vankarem, where we were held up by an ice blockade about five hundred yards wide. Here we were just opposite the trading station of John Olsen, so we went ashore and visited with him while Captain Putta took

soundings. A heavy rainstorm came up while we were at the Station, and the weather turned bitterly cold with a raw, all-pervasive cold and dampness that seemed to penetrate the thickest clothing, and to chill not only our bodies but our spirits as well.

However, Olsen's place was cheerful enough, with a big fire from imported coal glowing in a regular stove around which we sat and talked until the storm had let up a bit, and we were able to return in more comfort to the schooner.

The next day, happily, we awoke to brilliant sunshine. The whole Arctic world seemed to have been washed clean and shining by the preceding night's rain, and everybody on board was correspondingly optimistic. The thermometer stood at 31 degrees above but the air was crisp and bracing, quite unlike the rawness and dampness of the day before. We decided to try breaking through the ice blockade, and all hands went at the work with something like the earlier enthusiasm displayed when the voyage was young, and ice more of an exciting novelty.

It took three hours of hard ice-fighting and the poor little *Iskum* was battered and strained and scraped before we won through. But we made

it at last, and by five in the afternoon we had rounded Cape Oman, and were headed for Kaluchin Bay. The sun was still shining brightly, and taking it all in all, this was by far the best day we experienced during the entire latter part of the voyage.

An hour later we spied a native village near the shore, and stopped long enough for Carl, Ivan and myself to go in the dory to investigate. We found that all the men in the settlement were away hunting, but we made friends with some of the children. Native children who have seen whites are invariably shy, and we usually found that they ran from us until assured by their elders' friendliness that all was well.

On this occasion, however, we caught some of them in a friendly mood—or perhaps they were merely curious. We quite won their hearts when we presented them with several packages of chewing gum, for the natives took to that enthusiastically and a good many deals went through due largely to its benign influence.

There were only six native huts in this settlement, but we counted fifty dogs and I saw several more down by the shore. What is home without a dog, even in the Arctic? They are

apt to be savage brutes, however, and one must not offer liberties. In this little settlement I made a few rash attempts to pet the creatures but met with small encouragement. It seemed to amuse the youngsters, at least, and no one was actually bitten. Most of these dogs, of course, were plain "shaggies" or mongrels. There was no comparison between them and the mamelukes and huskies which made up the dog teams. The latter breeds, I observed, were larger and more wolf-like on the Siberian than on the Alaskan shore. Many had been crossed with wolves and were just as big and rangy. One could make friends with them eventually by throwing them walrus and seal meat when they were tired out or lying down. Or if they have fallen down or gotten tangled up in harness, one could win their confidence by extricating them and treating them kindly. But when two huskies got into a fight between themselves, there was usually a good deal of carnage. It was no fun to have to step in and stop a real row after it had gotten under way.

We arrived off our Kaluchin Station at ten P.M. of that same day. We were all weary and did not go ashore until the morning.

Carl and I went in to the station fairly early, however, and found Captain Winnerlund (whom we had left in charge as may be remembered, during our attempt to reach Kolyma) well, and everything about the station in good condition. Kolingo, whom we had also left with the Captain, to act as interpreter and general factotum, was equally glad to welcome us back, as he had taken a great liking to life on shipboard.

Mrs. Johnson and the baby remained on the schooner until we had completed our checking-up of the station and gone over with the Captain all his trades made during our absence.

By the end of the day we had everything shipshape at the station and the late afternoon was spent in moving the Johnson family and their possessions ashore to their old quarters.

The day closed with a wonderful "sunset," not the going down called sunset in more southerly latitudes. I took time off after our strenuous day, to rest and admire its beautiful color effects, which were among the finest I remember on the entire voyage.

Most of the people I met up there seemed somewhat amused at my enthusiasm for sunsets, sunrises, and the spectacular displays of the aurora borealis. I suppose it was an old story to them.

CHAPTER XX

KALUCHIN TO WHALEN

OUR first day at Kaluchin on the return trip was fairly eventful, as a large and excited delegation of natives came on board early in the morning insisting that the schooner should take them to Cape Oman, a distance of about twenty-five miles, to secure a dead, or wounded whale—we could not make out which.

As we had nothing special to do at the station that could not be equally well attended to on the morrow, and as we were almost as keen as the natives themselves to go whaling, we took the whole crowd on board and set sail. The overflow of would-be hunters which could not be accommodated owing to lack of room, we towed behind in their skin boats.

It was a good deal like taking a lot of excited youngsters on a picnic; nowhere else could be heard and seen such jabbering of voices or such shining faces as we had with us that morning.

The whale became almost a secondary consideration to the supreme importance of traveling on the schooner.

As things turned out, it was just as well that they had adopted this attitude of mind toward our outing, for when we arrived off Cape Oman, we found that the whale, having been speared to death by natives the day previously, had ungratefully sunk in twelve fathoms of water, so there was no hunting after all. We therefore turned back to Kaluchin, still towing astern several long strings of skin boats, much as groups of small boys will "hook a ride" in sledding time. I wished heartily I could have kodaked the procession.

The natives were naturally somewhat disappointed at their failure to secure the whale, but accepted philosophically the fun and excitement of the outing as a substitute. We arrived back at Kaluchin the next morning, having been gone nearly twenty-four hours on a perfectly fruitless errand.

Arrived at the station, we spent the rest of that day transferring that part of our cargo ashore which had originally been destined for our Kolyma trader. Fortunately the weather was ideal for

this work, being sunny and calm. We worked during the next two days taking on board the furs and ivory which had been brought to the station by the native traders during the past year. I felt well satisfied with the barter taken at Kaluchin, as there were some interesting pieces of native work in ivory, and fine pelts which would bring good prices in the States.

Carl was somewhat upset over having the Kolyma trade goods dumped on him, as they uncomfortably cluttered up the station where quarters were a bit cramped already, with the addition of the baby and its small native nurse-boy, Attua. As usual he made the best of things, being a conscientious, hard worker.

We were beset during these last days of hard work, by clouds of black and very hungry Arctic mosquitoes; a veritable pest, rendering our lives miserable while the invasion lasted. Near lagoons and flat-shored bays they were plentiful during the Arctic summer when the weather was calm, but luckily for us they always vanished the moment there was any wind.

Soon as we had comfortably settled the Johnson family for the long winter of darkness and had finished taking on the cargo, (likewise being

charged with letters from Carl and his wife to be mailed when we reached Tacoma) we weighed anchor and sailed east by south across the mouth of Kaluchin Bay.

We had our old friend and interpreter, Kolingo, with us once more since he did not wish to winter at the station. The schooner was beginning to seem quite lonely and deserted, having said good-bye to our passengers—the Astrosoffs, Andria the Communist, and the Johnsons.

I turned in about ten that evening after staying on deck to watch another gorgeous horizon sun, which changed the water and ice to blue and white fire. The whole Arctic Ocean, as far as we could see, was aglow with this curious, cold, colored light which spread across the land and touched a chain of mountains to the southwestward.

Early the next morning we arrived off a Chugchee village on the east side of Kaluchin Bay. The old chief and all his family came on board to trade with us. Dave Rutherford, with Kolingo's aid, spent the morning in some hard bargaining, which seemed to end satisfactorily on both sides.

The weather had turned misty and foggy but in spite of it we decided to continue on our way to the eastward, after the trades were finished. We

anchored for the night opposite another native settlement known as Neska, and were kept busy trading with the inhabitants who had promptly come on board and remained with us until after two in the morning. The life of a trader in the Arctic is certainly long on hectic activity and short on his night's sleep.

The natives were all back on board by nine A.M. Dave and Kolingo having succeeded so well at the previous village, took charge of the bartering.

The chief of the Neska settlement had brought two wives and six children out to the schooner with him, and we entertained the whole family in the cabin, where they wasted a good deal of precious time admiring the objects about them before they would get down to business.

I think about twenty grown-ups and children came on board during the morning, all chewing vociferously on the gum we had given them the day before. They have a most curious—and unpleasant—trick of cracking the gum in their mouths as they chew. We dubbed it the "gum chorus," and attempted unsuccessfully to imitate it.

We spent the next day at Natan, a somewhat larger native settlement; being held there longer

than we intended by fog and heavy ice. Thermometer was at 31 degrees again, and the ice came in steadily, closing tighter and tighter about the schooner until we were once more prisoners.

The natives were able to get out to us from shore in their small kayaks, wriggling precariously through narrow cracks and lanes in the ice, occasionally carrying their skin boats. So the time was not all lost as we were able to continue some brisk trading.

The two Chug-chees known to us as Natan Charley and "Hinky," who had invaded my cabin on our former call at Natan, were of course among the first natives to greet us. They were partners; hunters and trappers of no mean reputation, who also did a good deal of trading with other villages. We were able to secure from them a promise of first choice from their next season's furs.

Later we went ashore with Charley, walking on the ice and using skin boats when necessary. We visited his family where, as usual, we were offered tea. This, also as usual, consumed at least two hours, during which time it would have been strictly against etiquette to talk business of any sort.

After tea I called on all the other Chug-chee

families in the settlement, partly to avoid giving possible offense by playing favorites and partly to continue learning the manners and customs of these little-known but interesting savages.

The tundra was carpeted here as it had been at Cape Nord, with tiny wild-flowers, growing as close to the ground as moss, yet distinctly *not* moss at all. The far North presents many strange contrasts, but none more striking than these fragile, brilliant tundra flowers set in a frozen desolate landscape.

We could not clear the barrier ice until the next day, when we wasted no time in heading eastward once more in an attempt to round Cape Serd (Serdze-kamen, as the Russians call it) before the ice closed in there for an indefinite blockade.

By midnight, or a little after, we knew we were about off the Cape, but the night had turned so thick with mist we could not determine whether we were headed to clear the Cape, or going straight for it.

The schooner was so much lighter now that we had disposed of much heavy cargo, she rolled a good deal when there was no ice to keep the sea from kicking up. Despite the fog, the waves were high enough to make us roll badly off the Cape,

and with that and our anxiety as to safely getting around, we passed a most uncomfortable night.

We came through it without accident—more by luck than good management though, for it was impossible to take any accurate bearings in such a fog—and made another Chug-chee village the next morning where we stopped for a few hours' trading.

Here there was so much ice between us and the shore that the natives commenced chopping the edges off two adjacent bergs so their kayaks might reach us through a narrow lead. It seemed rather a hazardous proceeding to my unaccustomed eyes, but no disaster occurred, and they finally arrived aboard armed with some pelts (fox and polar bear principally) and clamorous for enamelware cups, tea, tobacco and other coveted barter.

We also acquired here a number of tusks of the female walrus, which are much finer ivory than the larger male tusks.

From that village we headed for Whalen. It was a particularly black night, with a high wind blowing, and a heavy sea, making the little *Iskum* jig and slide erratically from wave crest to trough. It was late enough now to notice the longer nights, and henceforth they would grow in length until

the sun hid his face from us entirely. Of course we hoped to be safely out of the Arctic before *that* melancholy time came around.

Arriving off Whalen, we found it impossible to reach shore on account of ice and a northwest wind so we were forced to change our itinerary and go around to Dezhneva until the wind changed, which it did toward evening, blowing the ice offshore and allowing us to make another try for Whalen.

We took with us a certain Doctor George Nechepoorenco, who introduced himself as such and said he was representing "The Coöperative Bolshevik traders of the Chukotsk peninsula." He was also acting Governor, or something equivalent. We had become accustomed to the alleged or self-styled Siberian "Governors," having already encountered three of them, each with meager "armies," consisting of few men, much in need of clothing and useful guns. The Bolsheviki (Reds) and Mensaviki (Whites) seemed to be chasing each other in a haphazard fashion.

Nechepoorenco had some goods he wanted transported to Whalen, and wished to buy a number of things from us, offering in payment some white fox skins.

We likewise took on board at Dezhneva two Russian sailors and a man named Dick Gosky, the notorious "gunman" for Bischoff, the late Governor.

Gosky was not a very welcome addition to our number, but there seemed no convincing way of refusing him passage, since we had room enough on board, and had already carried passengers when necessity required.

Transportation in the Arctic is largely dependent upon the goodwill of traders, and without their vessels many people would be stranded indefinitely in various small settlements of the far North without the possibility of conducting their business, or returning to their homes. So one does not refuse a passage to anyone without unimpeachable reasons for so doing.

We encountered a good deal of large, floating ice between Dezhneva and Whalen, but the solid pack had been broken up by the change of wind, which was now blowing from the south, luckily for us, and we got through without serious hindrance.

CHAPTER XXI

RACING WITH ELEMENTS TO SAVE NATIVES

THE Whalen Chug-chees welcomed the return of the schooner by enthusiastically swarming on board. We did some trading, but most of our business that first day was with Dr. Nechepoorenco, who had a long list of wants, and with Gasdaroff, the Russian trader, who had been so courteous about showing me the sights of Whalen on our first visit.

Dr. Nechepoorenco represented to us that the population of Whalen was threatened by a serious famine, unless we would go over to Nome, purchase supplies, and bring them back to Siberia. The people depended upon some Russian vessel to bring supplies for the coming winter. This vessel had failed to appear, and was now so long overdue they had given her up entirely. General appearances and the condition of the natives seemed to verify the Doctor's statements. Seal and walrus were scarce and the natives had taken to eating whatever dead ones they could find. I know of

nothing more terrible than hunger in the Arctic, for with its fewer distractions and ways of relief, it becomes an obsession that preys upon the mind, and seems to affect the brain as well as the body.

This proposition disarranged our plans most unfortunately as the trip to Nome and back would mean a dangerous delay in getting out of the Arctic before winter. But one cannot, in cold blood, condemn an entire settlement of men, women and little children to almost certain death by starvation, when it is possible to avert it, so we agreed to make the trip.

We learned from Nechepoorenco that during our trip to Cape Nord and back, the entire Chukotsk Peninsula Soviet Government had come in, calling themselves the Confederated and Associated Bolshevik Traders, with headquarters at Petropovlovski, Anadir and Whalen—but apparently without supplies. Nechepoorenco had been placed in sole charge at the last named place as Acting Governor, and was apparently interesting himself in the welfare of his people, as evidenced by his anxiety that we should bring them the necessaries of life at all costs. By reason of ice conditions seal and walrus had not been plentiful since his taking charge.

A heavy southerly gale and much floating ice off the Cape kept us at Whalen until daylight, when we sailed for our station at Sanivina Straits. The trip there was attended by heavy swells, but we were free from ice peril for the first time since we encountered dangerous ice off Indian Point on June 23rd at the beginning of the voyage. Since that time we had been fifty-eight days in the Arctic packs and leads, waging an almost hourly battle against the ice, and the relief to strained nerves was tremendous when we found ourselves, for the time being at least, not under the necessity of keeping a day-and-night vigil.

We spent about twenty-four hours at Sanivina and left for Nome in the teeth of a driving north-easter and a wild sea. If we had retained the supplies intended for our Kolyma Station, which we had unloaded at Kaluchin, to be forwarded when possible, we might have spared ourselves the hazardous journey ahead; for these provisions comprised pretty much what the people of Whalen needed. On account of the ice conditions behind us, a return trip to Kaluchin would have been a far greater gamble than the Nome trip.

We had a stormy passage. Everything movable on the schooner rolled and tumbled about. The

King Island, Bering Sea, forty miles west of Nome

seas were high, and the wind blew with gale strength, but the staunch little boat stayed right on the job and bucked her way through.

We passed King Island late on the second afternoon out. I tried hard to photograph the scene, for the high cliffs with the sun shining on them made an interesting subject.

The island rises several hundred feet, almost perpendicularly, out of the sea with a picturesque little native village propped up against one side of the cliff. As the *Iskum* was under full reefed sails, lying right over to her rail, it was not the easiest matter to snapshot anything. But as usual when it came to photographing views and new objects of interest on the trip, I—a rank amateur—rushed in where angels might well fear to tread. I suppose my theory was that I had nothing to lose by trying, and I *might* get a picture.

The storm still held, and that night everyone went to bed in their clothes. We were not taking any chances of having to man the boats suddenly and without warning in that kind of weather.

We made Nome very early the following morning, and I at once went ashore with the captain and engineer. I sent telegrams to Tacoma, found some mail waiting for us, and then reported to the

Customs. These duties attended to, I could give a thought to a luxurious hot bath such as I had been longing for, and a visit to the barber for a shave and hair cut. Up to then, of course, we had played barber for each other on the schooner, with what results may be imagined.

Captain Winnerlund had received news in his mail that called him back to the States. He wished to be released and another captain appointed in his place.

To this I agreed and advanced Mr. Putta, the mate and navigating officer, to the rank of Master.

Mr. Rutherford and I were extremely busy all that day purchasing the supplies for Nechepoorenco. We rushed this business so we could make an early start back to Whalen. We were really racing against the Arctic night and a frozen Behring Sea.

However, as usually happens, there were unforeseen delays and it was not until the morning of our fourth day at Nome that we were actually ready to pull out. Finally we settled everything requiring our attention, and went on board the morning of September third, taking with us ten natives—Eskimos—whose homes were at East Cape, and who were anxious to return there before

winter. In addition to these natives, who made a decided overload for the already heavily laden schooner, we took three of their favorite dogs and towed their big whaleboat astern.

If their plight, stranded at Nome without friends, had not been so desperate, we would not have considered the matter, but there seemed no help for it. They begged and besought us piteously to return them to their homes. As two of their number were women and one a little child, we could not find it in our hearts or conscience to leave them to certain misery where they were.

Of course one might well ask what they had planned to do about getting back to East Cape in the first place. They certainly could not know that the *Iskum* would happen along so conveniently. But then, that is the North. One is obliged, by the absence of any kind of established communication, to depend largely upon a lucky chance for getting to one's chosen destination. And the natives, being more or less like children, had probably merely assumed, blithely and optimistically, that something would turn up to solve their problem—and it did. "It" being ourselves in this particular case.

Dave put the two native women at work pow-

dering and cleaning the white fox skins in the cabin, but the others merely lay about and got under foot according to the invariable custom.

The two women and the child slept on the cabin floor under a little bit of anything in the way of covering and clothing the boat afforded, for we had not enough real bedding to accommodate such an influx of visitors. Dave found a top in our trade goods and presented it to the youngster, who forthwith went wild with delight. It was probably the best plaything he had ever seen—much less actually possessed as his own.

With such a heavy cargo as we now had on board, and so many additional passengers, we dared not attempt the return crossing to Whalen by the direct route. So going north, we hugged the Alaskan shore, and crossed by the Diomedes—Big and Little—to East Cape. From there we continued on our way, keeping under the lee of the Cape's big bluff.

It was as risky a bit of sailing as I ever want to undertake. We had no sooner entered the Arctic Ocean than it set out to show us it could live up to its reputation. The schooner was badly strained by her overload, and as the propeller had been damaged in our ice fighting and we had not been

The largest Eskimo village in Siberia at East Cape. Natives in skin boat (made from walrus hides) just leaving our schooner for their igloo homes on 2600′ bluff at top of picture

able to repair it at Nome or put in the new propeller we carried for an emergency, things looked more than a little precarious for a while.

On this trip from Nome to East Cape, someone on board asked one of the Eskimo women how she would like to see the country we came from—America.

She said emphatically: "No, no, too much hot!" And her companions all agreed with her that the heat would undoubtedly kill them, or at least, make them very sick. It was an amusing conception of what they term "outside," in which I found all the natives I met heartily concurred. This woman and her husband were remarkably intelligent on other subjects and spoke "quite little English" as they proudly informed us. Their little six-year-old boy was really lovely—I thought at my first sight of him that he might almost have posed for Reynolds' "St. John and the Lamb."

On our arrival at East Cape we thankfully shed our Eskimos, their dogs and the whale boat. It was certainly a relief to get that part of the business successfully over and done with. We then rounded the big, rocky Cape itself, and so made our way back to Whalen, having a little trouble with ice

on the way, though not enough to block us at any point.

At Whalen trouble of a different sort was waiting for us. Nechepoorenco appeared to have entirely forgotten all his former anxiety on his people's behalf. He utterly disregarded the inconvenience and actual danger we had undergone to obtain his supplies; and after much talking which led nowhere, it soon became apparent that he was prepared to disregard shamelessly all the terms of our agreement.

The reason for this, we later learned, was that our old acquaintance, the schooner *Chukotsk*, had come down from Cape Nord during our absence at Nome, and was then at Natan. From her, Nechepoorenco believed he could obtain the supplies he needed, and on more advantageous terms, since she would be going out of the Arctic soon, and would be anxious to get rid of all superfluous goods and provisions.

Nechepoorenco was not what one would call reliable. We found during our stay in that part of the world that the word or agreement of one of his type is never good until the deal is an accomplished fact. That we had risked not only our schooner but lives as well, to accommodate him

and his people, mattered nothing to him in comparison with the chance of saving a few dollars of barter by buying from the *Chukotsk*, leaving us "stuck" with the Nome cargo bought upon his order, and because of his imploring requests.

CHAPTER XXII

FINAL "OUT" OF THE ARCTIC

THE morning after our return to Whalen was calm and clear. The sun, pouring down in a golden flood on the sea ice, brought out millions of dazzling flashes of colored light from the broken surface. The Big and Little Diomedes on one hand and the great black cliffs of East Cape on the other, in full sunlight, made a wonderful picture which no mere camera could hope to portray.

Contrasts being the rule in the Arctic, my enthusiasm for an impressive and beautiful scene was presently destined to be tempered by the very mundane report of our engineer that our fuel tanks were getting low. Out of our original store of 7,000 gallons of fuel oil we had already consumed 4,000. We must make the remaining 3,000 count, at all costs, and use our sails instead of our engines whenever possible.

However, we could shift to sail almost entirely

if put to it, for the wind was one thing we never lacked in those stormy regions at the top of the world. The principal worry with which we were faced at the moment, was the ungrateful—not to say dishonorable—attitude of "Acting-Governor" Nechepoorenco, in trying to crawl out of his bargain.

We had the goods bought for Gasdaroff put ashore, and then had several sessions with His Excellency, in which, after both sides were pretty much worn out with argument and reiterations, we finally came to a second agreement which enabled us to get rid of the Nome stores.

That ended the business keeping us at Whalen, and as the weather was still fair, and the ice held off shore by the wind, we put to sea at eight that evening, headed for Loren. We had so much annoyance at Whalen, that I think the whole ship's company drew breaths of relief to be out of the place. I know I turned into my bunk, dog-tired mentally and physically.

The schooner laid off the Cape until daylight, however, as the black, floating ice was impossible to see at night, and we were not taking any chances after all the heavy battering the poor *Iskum* had endured.

We awoke to a sunless day, damp, and intensely cold, with the sky overhung with threatening clouds. They meant a storm of some kind—probably snow. We reached Loren about four in the afternoon, ahead of the storm, and after doing some trading with natives and with two Russians —"Long Dick" Sultana and Yoloff—we accepted a consignment of coal and two cook-stoves to be delivered five miles farther south at Louis Malsogan's Station, for a Russian named Sam Huetieff.

We reached Malsogan's very early the next morning, about six o'clock, and going ashore found the two huts which comprised the station in charge of two native women. They made us understand that the men were all away on a short trading trip, so we dumped two tons of coal on the beach, above high water mark, and set up the stoves, pipes and all, in the huts.

The women were delighted with the stoves, and intensely curious about their use, which we had to explain in minutest detail.

We were more than a little doubtful, in spite of all our explaining, as to the kind of meals the traders would receive when the stoves should be put into active operation. However, that was not our affair. The men being away, we were not

even in danger of having to accept an invitation to dinner, so all was well; and we departed peacefully for our next stop—our station again at Sanivina Straits.

Our water tanks were low, but we would be able to refill them at Sanivina. The wind was fair, enabling us to carry all sail except the jib, and we made good time. We were practically free of ice large enough to hamper us—and we had no reason to anticipate running into it again on the return voyage.

I had found at Whalen my old friend, "Michael Angelo's David"—the native boy whose cheerfulness and splendid physique had won my admiration at the commencement of the voyage. We had left him at Whalen on our trip west, and he seemed to have fallen into bad hands, for when he came down to the schooner to beg us to take him back to his home in Sanivina, he was hungry, and sick—poisoned by bad alcohol given him by some Jap traders. These same Japanese were afterward drowned in a drunken brawl near Whalen, and seeing what they had done to my splendid "David" I could not find it in my heart to regret their taking off.

We fed and doctored the boy to the best of our

ability, and due to his magnificent health and physical strength, he came through all right.

On our arrival at Sanivina we ran into a bad storm, which prevented our discharging the cargo that day. We tried it, using the dory; Ivan, the Dalmatian sailor and "David" offering to take charge of managing the transfer. The only result of their efforts, however, was that the dory was swept out to sea by the storm and we had to follow in the schooner. It took us three and a half hours of very anxious work before we rescued them, and got both men and dory back on the schooner.

We then returned to Sanivina, and anchored off the station until morning, waiting for wind and the heavy seas to abate.

In the morning, however, the gale was blowing with as much violence as on the day before, making it impossible to get ashore or for those at the station to come to us. Our anchor had dragged a quarter of a mile during the night; but we were lucky to have had nothing worse happen.

We spent the day trying to rearrange things in the cabin so we could all be more comfortable. But on account of the pitching and tossing of the vessel, we did not accomplish much.

Late in the afternoon the wind moderated and

we were able to get some cargo ashore. The natives helped us with their whale boat on account of the heavy surf on a rocky coast, which made our dory useless for the purpose.

On the last trip I went ashore in the whale boat with the Eskimos (we were back once more in the Eskimos' country), and in making the surf landing —jumping overside and between combers, as was necessary—I lingered a second too long in picking up one of my fur gauntlets which I had dropped. I tried to make up that precious, lost instant, by running at my best speed but was badly hampered by my fur clothing and muckluks. I was just a shade too slow—being about twenty feet behind the scurrying natives—and the next great comber chasing after at express speed caught me when I had some forty or fifty feet to reach the rocks on shore.

There was no keeping one's feet at the onslaught of that wave, and down I went ignominiously enough and was tossed about in the icy water and finally flung up against one of the big rocks on the beach, where the natives rescued me and pulled me up, blind and drenched.

For a few yards I managed to stumble along with them, feeling most unpleasantly numb and dizzy.

Then the Eskimos must have noticed my condition for suddenly I was picked up and carried about, shaken up and made generally dizzier every moment. They knew what they were doing, however, for while the three men who had charge of me were keeping me in motion to start my frozen circulation again, the rest of them started digging frantically in the shelving rocks and sand, until they had made a shallow pit, rather unpleasantly resembling a grave.

They next built a fire of dried tundra moss and other vegetation that could be found, and succeeded in heating a lot of fair-sized stones with which they lined the pit, making a kind of primitive bake-oven of it. The final step in the novel proceedings was to strip off my wet clothes, roll me in a reindeer skin and lower me into the improvised oven where I was kept until thoroughly dry, and most blissfully warm and comfortable. There is no doubt that their prompt and effectual treatment saved my life, for I was nearly gone when they pulled me out of the wave's backwash.

When my rescuers were satisfied that I was fit to travel, they took me out of my oven and insisted upon carrying me—still wrapped in reindeer skins—all the way to our station. Arrived there, I

was given dry clothing, the fire was built up higher, and I was planted as closely to it as I could stand; after which came hot coffee, and some food. I had an appetite by that time, and enjoyed the meal. No white man should attempt improvement upon the methods of Arctic natives when it comes to protection from the dangers with which they are familiar.

I remained at the station that night, sleeping on the floor near the fire on a soft winter reindeer skin, and covered snugly with two more. By six the next morning Parsons (our trader at Sanivina, it may be remembered) and I were up, and got ourselves a hearty breakfast of coffee, flap-jacks and store eggs, while around us on the floor my Eskimo saviors of yesterday, slept—and snored vigorously.

The greater part of that day was spent in discharging cargo, and taking on a new one of furs, ivory, and whalebone, to take home with us. Later, toward evening, we pulled out for Glogened Harbor, where fresh water could be obtained for our tanks.

Another storm was coming up from the northeast, and when we arrived at Glogened there was already a heavy gale blowing off shore. We cast

anchor in ten fathoms and the two sailors went ashore in the small dory, prospecting for water.

Being very tired I went to bed soon after we anchored. Doing so was rather a complicated experiment for the cabin was now almost literally full of fox, wolf and rabbit skins. On cold nights the skins were useful at the foot of the bed to keep one's feet warm, but at other times they were decidedly in the way, when one wanted to move about the cabin.

On account of the heavy weather, the Captain decided to lie at anchor all night. Toward morning the gale died down to a strong sailing breeze, and we set the men to work very early filling the water tanks. They finished this about half past six and by eight we were pulling out of the harbor for St. Lawrence Island and Unalaska—our next objectives.

An average "bit" of Siberian Arctic shore

CHAPTER XXIII

"GOODBYE SIBERIA"

EVERYBODY on the schooner went about saying jubilantly, "Goodbye, Siberia!" We had turned our backs at last on the Siberian Arctic and our bow was headed for home, which meant the good old U. S. A. However, there were a number of stops ahead of us before Tacoma, and—as matters turned out—still some adventures to be encountered.

We had a fair wind all that first night after leaving Glogened, but though the wind continued to hold during the day, the weather grew misty and the visibility was low. Still, the little *Iskum* went along steadily under full sail, doing her best bravely—which did not exceed eight knots.

By eight o'clock that evening, we knew we should be in the vicinity of St. Lawrence Island, but on account of the heavy mists it was impossible to locate anything with any degree of accuracy. We therefore took in sail and made soundings.

An hour later, after darkness had fallen, we were just able to see a dim blur of land which we knew must be the island we were trying for. In the mist and darkness, however, being unfamiliar with conditions along the coast, we decided it would be more prudent not to make the Harbor, so continued on our way to Unalaska, six hundred and five miles to the south.

By morning we were twenty miles south of St. Lawrence Island. We had made slow time during the night on account of the fog, which had increased rather than diminished. Our propeller shaft had been badly strained in the Arctic ice, and its blades were damaged, causing it to slip and the engine to race badly. Even with all sails set to help the engine, we were making no more than six knots. Later this dropped to five and a half as the propeller continued to slip more and more alarmingly. If it thus kept up, we would be forced to take the inside coast route home via Kodiak, Seward, Cordova, Juneau and Ketchikan.

By this time it seemed to everyone on board that none of us were ever going to be really rested again. It was an effort to get up in the morning, and an effort to go about our various duties as usual after

we were up. Doubtless this was a natural reaction from our three months of continued physical and nervous strain, but it hit us all at the same time, though with varying degrees of intensity.

We tried sailing for a time without the auxiliary engine, and finding the schooner made four and a half knots, we felt it wiser to rely entirely upon our sails for the rest of that day and the next night. The sea had gotten up a good deal since morning, and the *Iskum* rolled heavily. Consequently, there was not much sleep for anyone on board, owing to the pitching and tossing. Nor was it any better the following day. I had hard work to get into the galley for breakfast, and when I did manage to make it, found the cook in a great state owing to the fact that his fried, medicated eggs had taken a dive off the galley range onto the floor. I did what I could to cheer him up, assuring him we would be satisfied with uncooked cereals (which had to be munched dry, tasting a good deal like sawdust. But on such a trip one soon learns never to grumble about food.)

By ten in the morning the sun began to show itself—for the first time in several days, and everyone felt many degrees more optimistic. It's funny what an influence the weather has on one's mental

outlook; but it's a fact that has to be reckoned with on a trip like ours.

The schooner continued to make slow headway, as both the clutch and propeller were on strike more or less. If there were anything else the ice could have done to the *Iskum*—except crush her altogether like the ill-fated *Eagle*—I don't know just what it could have been. She was scarred and strained from bow to stern, and all her machinery was suffering from the constant jarring of the ice floes.

I spent an hour trying to get some exercise by walking the cabin deck—said deck being at an angle of 25 degrees, which made the exercise very real indeed. However, as long as I didn't slide downhill and over the low rail, all was well. A whale was vigorously spouting and tumbling on the port side, during my promenade, and a fur seal came up three times quite near the schooner, to study us curiously. This was the only life we had seen since leaving East Cape nearly ten days before.

The next morning I was immensely cheered by waking to find a wonderful sunrise shining through the cabin portholes, and gleaming on the pelts of white fox, red fox, seal, etc., with which the place

was crowded. This was the first day we were able to go on deck without feeling the bite of the usual Arctic cold. At this point we were only a hundred and seventy-five miles north of Unalaska; but five days behind schedule owing to the Sanivina storms, and the ice damage to engine and propeller.

The ship still rolled badly, due to her partly disabled condition, but the warming sunshine more than made up for all minor discomforts. The whole ship's company was in high spirits, counting the days before we should be actually home again.

The two Bolshevist sailors we had shipped in Siberia were doing their duty capably, and even Gosky, Bischoff's gunman, with the unenviable record of bloodshed and murder behind him, had proved surprisingly obedient and law-abiding during the entire trip down.

This man was bound for Odessa, on the Black Sea, and we assisted the Immigration authorities in railroading him across the United States and out of New York for Odessa. He tried to explain to me that he was a policeman back in Siberia, and compelled to do what Bischoff ordered, whether he liked it or not. Though I made no comments, I cannot say his apologies impressed me much.

A trader in Siberia had informed me that Gosky

was once found among ice and snow seated comfortably on the warm body of his last kill and calmly eating the dead man's food; in a place where no burials took place except where feasible to weight and drop bodies through ice holes into the Arctic Sea. I reminded Gosky of this and received what I regarded as a tacit confirmation. However, the Siberian rackets between the Reds and Whites which came under my observation were so grotesque that little should be taken for granted unless actually seen.

We arrived at Unalaska at half past six that same evening, and reported to the Customs, later going over to the wireless station to send messages home. It was certainly good to feel we were once more in touch with the old familiar world.

CHAPTER XXIV

SHUMAGIN DANGERS

WE were four days at Unalaska, working at repairing the clutch, and about noon on September 20th were able to move the schooner round to Dutch Harbor, where we were finally forced to wireless the engine makers regarding our troubles. However, without a drydock we were not able to accomplish much, and finally pulled out for Larsen's Bay, an Alaska Packer's station, seventy-five miles west of Kodiak, where we hoped to be able to change our propeller.

Being in a rather helpless condition, we kept well outside all island straits on account of tides and currents. The sea was moderating at last, and the wind favorable, later freshening gradually to a stiff sailing breeze which heeled us over at the old reliable angle again. We were able to keep all sails set during the night, which was a wonderful aid to our limping machinery.

The seas grew rougher toward morning, and

day dawned misty and sunless, with the wind on the port quarter now, and the schooner doing her gallant best to overcome her handicap. If it hadn't been for her dragging propeller she would have made wonderful time. By six in the evening we had the Shumagin Islands abeam, and true to their reputation they gave us during the next twenty-four hours just about as vivid a sample of bad weather as I hope ever to encounter.

The seas continued to kick up more and more, and the wind strengthened to gale force. By morning we realized we had met the expected Equinoctial storm in all its violence. Not only spray now, but solid water, was washing over the cabin deck, and it was hard to keep things dry below. The sun, however, shone brightly through all the wind and rising seas, which helped a bit mentally if not actually.

Were it not for the disabled propeller, there was no danger as the *Iskum* is an amazing sea craft and held right up to her course, with only the staysail for steerage way, and the white combers going over us in glassy-looking walls of green water.

I spent most of my time in the cabin (since I was superfluous on deck) endeavoring to keep the fox skins dry, as the water was forcing its way through the

skylights, and slashing about among our best furs.

The storm became so violent we were unable to make headway. We hove to and were slowly but surely being driven back towards the austere and inhospitable rocks which form the shore of the Shumagins. When there seemed no alternative, we made sure the breaker kegs in the life dory were still full of fresh water and prepared to take a chance with that small life-boat. The schooner would be lost anyway. But if we were lucky enough to guide this small boat so the seas would carry us through some one of the different reaches between the Islands, we would have a chance, when in their lea, to make the main shore. Whether it was the nearness of the great rocks themselves or just kind Providence, a slightly different wind action enabled us to make way to the eastward just enough to clear the eastern rocks by a mere schooner length. In fact, the tension was such, and it all seemed to pass so quickly, that we had difficulty in promptly realizing our escape. The second time the good Lord saved us by change of wind.

The gale continuing, we soon found ourselves off the mouth of a small but apparently sheltered harbor on the main shore of the Aleutian Penin-

sula. We decided to enter this "harbor" and ride out the rest of the storm. Unluckily for us this move was a perfect illustration of the old adage about "out of the frying-pan into the fire."

We put in before a head wind, and found ourselves in a funnel-shaped bay, or inland harbor, of great depth (except near the outer end where we had entered). The wind came through the funnels made by the high cliffs surrounding the bay, with such force that it blew the schooner around and about, as well as from one side of the bay to the other. We had literally no control over the vessel, and experienced much of what must be, I fancy, the sensations of an aviator doing for the first time the "falling leaf," with perhaps a bit of side-slipping and tail-spinning thrown in alternately, for extra measure.

The schooner was swinging and swirling to such an extent in these eddies of wind that she was forced back to the mouth again, and from there our only chance of escape was again to face the storm outside. Accordingly, we put on all possible speed, and rode out into the heavy seas and wind of the open ocean—thankful enough to be back there, bad as it might be! One and all on board registered a vow never to trust any harbors

along that coast again, let them beckon ever so alluringly.

The gale lasted all that night and most of the second day, during which time we hove to, riding it out as best we could, well beyond the treacherous entrance to what we christened "Funnel Harbor." Toward night of the second day, the wind died down slightly and early the morning after we arrived at Larsen's Bay and tied up to the dock.

Here we were fortunately able to change our damaged propeller at last, and did what we could to repair the clutch; the latter not such a successful job as the former.

That afternoon I took a long walk alone down through the little native settlement along the beach, and from there back through the long grass and shrubbery in which the salmon berries grow so plentifully in summer for the delectation of the Kodiak bears.

It was certainly good to see green hills and grass again, and to watch the various land birds after our long experience of sea life only. The end of my walk rewarded me with a specially fine sunset to add to memory's picture gallery.

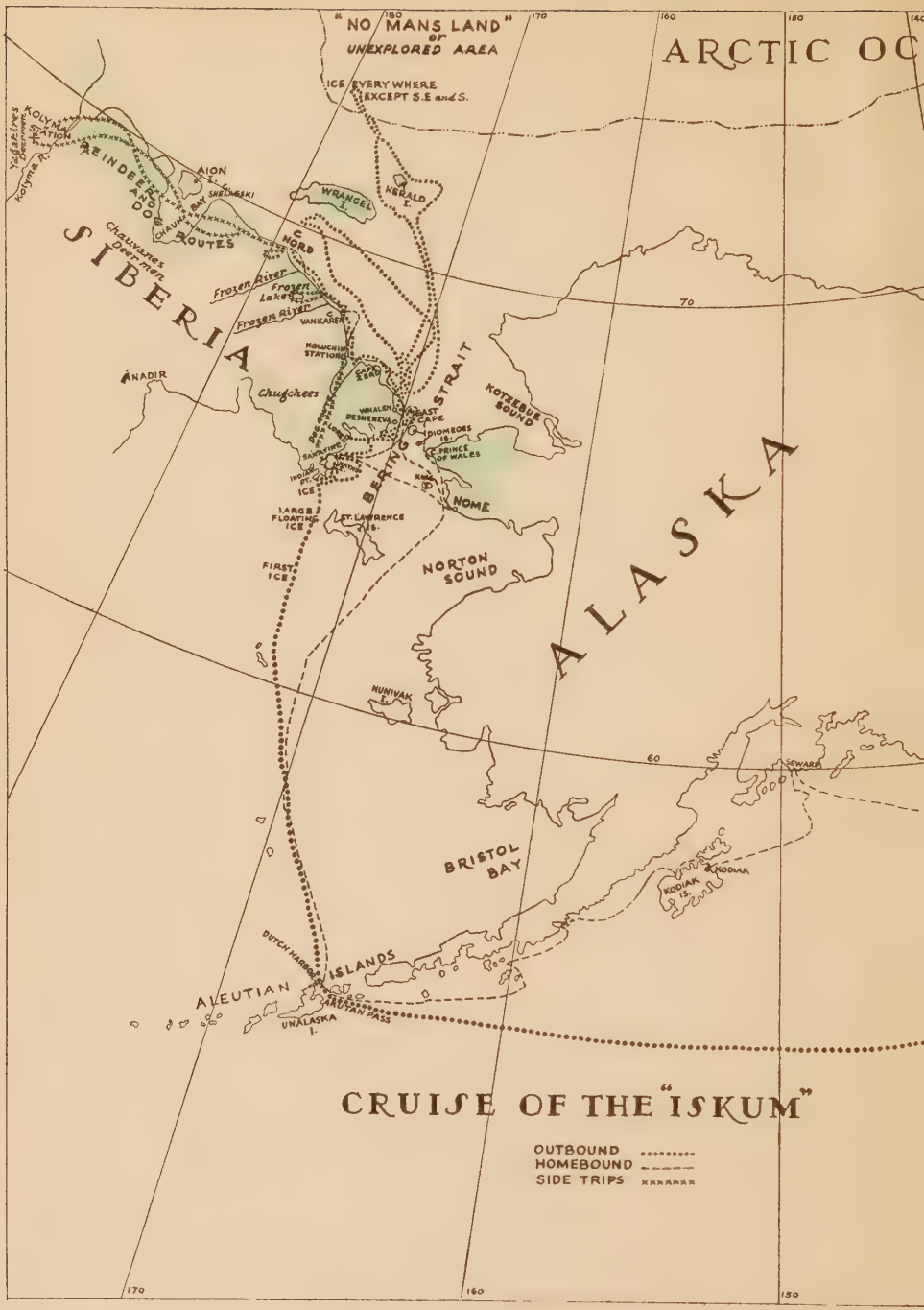
From Larsen's Bay we proceeded to Kodiak, going through the straits; a most interesting sail

between Green Islands on one hand and a chain of mountains, their sides covered in places with great patches of white ash from the eruption of the Katmi Volcano across the straits.

The rest of the voyage back was fairly eventful —for those on the schooner at least, as we encountered a more than ordinary run of bad weather and storms; but a description of them would hold little interest for anyone else. Our adventures—such as they were—in the little-known Siberian Arctic were ended. We had traded with our last Chug-chee, and Deerman; visited our last skin igloo; taken part in our final, prolonged ceremony of native tea-drinking. We had left the "Top o' the World" behind us, and were headed for the familiar sights and sounds of home.

From Kodiak we were forced by storms to touch at Seward, then moved down and out of Resurrection Bay. The weather having moderated, we set our sails and shaped our course for Ketchikan, via Icy Straits, and thence by power down to Tacoma, our starting point,—and Home!

Taking the voyage all in all, there was certainly a lot of hard work, tension, exposure and hardship to it; we were cold, overworked and worried the greater part of the time. Yet—like everyone who



"NO MANS LAND" or UNEXPLORED AREA
ICE EVERY WHERE EXCEPT S.E and S.
ARCTIC OC
Yagakires Deermen
KOLYMA STATION
Kolyma R.
REINDEER AND DOG ROUTES
AION I.
SHELAGSKI
CHAUNA BAY
WRANGEL I.
HERALD I.
C. NORD
Chauvanes Deermen
SIBERIA
Frozen River
Frozen Lake
Frozen River
C. VANKAREN
KOLUCHIN STATION
CAPE ZERO
ANADIR
Chugchees
WHALEN
DESHENEVA
EAST CAPE
DIOMEDES IS.
C. PRINCE OF WALES
BERING STRAIT
KOTZEBUE SOUND
SAVAVINE
INDIAN PT. ICE
KING
NOME
LARGE FLOATING ICE
ST. LAWRENCE IS.
FIRST ICE
NORTON SOUND
ALASKA
NUNIVAK I.
SEWARD
BRISTOL BAY
KODIAK
KODIAK IS.
DUTCH HARBOR
ALEUTIAN ISLANDS
AKUTAN PASS
UNALASKA I.
CRUISE OF THE "ISKUM"
OUTBOUND
HOMEBOUND
SIDE TRIPS
180
170
160
150
70
60

130
U.S.
JUNEAU
SITKA
KETCHIKAN
DIXON ENTRANCE
QUEEN CHARLOTTE IS.
BRITISH COLUMBIA
VANCOUVER
VICTORIA
VANCOUVER IS.
STS. OF JUAN DE FUCA
SEATTLE
TACOMA
STATE OF WASHINGTON
140
130

ventures into that "Top o' the World" country, I have a hankering to return. Everything is different there. It's like no other place in the world and no other experience!

THE END.

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